# new masses

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"June Wedding."

## IEATER S A WEAPON

Arnaud D'Usseau

## TROTSKY'S KAMPF

by V. J. Jerome

## RISE O' THE RED STAR

by Sean O'Casey

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# just a minute

WELL, we were all set to halt the giant presses (that's John Stuart's favorite phrase) to bring you a last-minute account of the maritime strike, but as you know the story had a happy ending before it even began. So Dick Boyer, our A-1 reporter, got some sleep last weekend after all, we didn't have to spend Monday uprooting and transplanting type, and press day will probably be merely strenuous, as usual, instead of frantic.

This department went down to the National Maritime Union hall at midnight Friday night, the strike deadline, to see what was doing. West 17th Street looked like Broadway at rush hour: waves of seamen walked east from the hall toward the subways, heading for home and a few hours' sleep before coming back at 6 AM to shape up for what probably would have been the biggest picketline in history. They'd done their talking in the meeting just ended; now they were silent and thoughtful. The strike was on: there had been no word from Washington. When we came to the hall we found several hundred seamen standing around, watching others come out of the door. A fellow in dungarees shouted: "We only want the guys on the twelve-to-four watch! All you other guys go home and get some sleep!"

But not many moved. A Negro near us said, "They don't want to leave this place. They're too worked up." A tall warrant officer in his dress blues came over and asked us if we knew where the ACA meeting was being held: he'd just come off his ship that afternoon, had spent the evening seeing *On Whitman Avenue*, and couldn't tell whether he was most excited about the strike or the play. He couldn't sort them out in his mind—they seemed to be part of the same thing. We got to talking: Joe told us how when his ship reached Portuguese East Africa "the fellows piled out and made straight for the nearest gin mill. But there was more there than just the local rotgut—that was where the longshoremen hung out, and the seamen went there to talk union. They helped the local guys with advice and dough—and look how it paid off. This strike is going to get support in practically every port in the world."

ANOTHER seaman named Hank heard us mention NM, and came up to congratulate us on Dick Boyer's pre-strike piece in the last issue—"Tidal Wave on the Waterfront." (Incidentally, the NMU ordered 1,000 extra copies of that issue.) He went on to comment on Joe North's article on Canada's "spy" trial (NM, June 11).

"It reminds me," he said, "of the time I sat up all night talking to a Canadian comrade about his experience in a Canadian concentration camp where he was kept for a year and a half, early in the war, for the crime of organizing and leading a strike.

"He told me," Hank continued, "how American capital has actually outdistanced British capital by far in its control of Canada. In fact, he said, Canada would long ago have broken free from the British 'commonwealth' except for the fact that Ford, General Motors and other [illegible] American corporations with huge plan[illegible]n Canada gain the benefit of the Empire's preferential tariffs on their exports to the dominions and colonies.

"Incidentally, this comrade and 150 other progressives, Communist and non-Communist, were held in a concentration camp along with 300 Italian prisoners and 700 German prisoners. They had to be well organized to protect themselves against the Nazis. Other anti-fascists in the camp included Jewish refugees and the militant crew of a Dutch ship, who were left practically defenseless against the Nazis when the Canadians finally won the right to be kept in a concentration camp for 'Canadian only.'"

WHO'S WHO in this issue: Sean O'Casey's latest novel is *Drums Under the Windows*, reviewed in our June 11 issue. . . . V. J. Jerome is associate editor of the monthly *Political Affairs*. . . . James E. Schevill's poems have been published in *Poetry*, *Pacific*, *The Arizona Quarterly* and *Experiment*, of which he is assistant editor. One of his radio plays won a prize from the National Theater Conference and was performed by the American Broadcasting Co. last March. . . . Arnaud D'Usseau is co-author of the current Broadway hit *Deep Are the Roots*, which recently delivered its 300th blow against Jim Crow. B. M.


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# RISE O' THE RED STAR

***"And in me is the belief, as strong as the belief that I live, that the endeavor of the Soviet people will be but for the good of all men."***

## By SEAN O'CASEY

*This week, June 22, marks the fifth anniversary of the Soviet Union's entry into the war of liberation. No words can describe the enormity of her sacrifice to the common victory. The short-minded and the evil would make the world forget the debt it owes our Soviet allies. But they can no more erase the memory of what the USSR did to destroy the Hitlerites than they can erase the stars or the minds of men themselves. We are happy to publish this tribute by one of the most distinguished figures in English letters.*

Jean Bart.

It rose, suddenly, through the gloom of a dark horizon. It rose while all the sway of earth was shaking like a thing unfirm. A portent of good for most; a portent of evil for many. It provoked more agitation, more excitement, more fear, than did the lion that walked around the Capitol, and the sheeted dead gibbering in the streets of Rome; for truly common slaves held up their hands which did flame and burn like twenty torches joined, and yet, not sensible of fire, remained unscorched. And when they saw the star, rulers and fearful leaders of men ran hither and thither with naked swords in their hands.

Many well-set people of the world ridiculed it, saying to their friends: "It is but a minor star, a puff of faint flame, a flash in the pan of the sky; a minor star that will fizzle out in less than a year, and fall plumb down out of the sky for ever." And right well a lot labored and fought to bring the Red Star scuttling down in less than a year, for they feared its influence on the timid white stars thronging the rest of the sky. They kept their eyes on it, and saw it rise higher over Petrograd and Moscow; they heard the people, the oppressed people, hailing it, and watched them standing tip-toe to get a glimpse of it. So they took counsel together, bent themselves into opposition, and set forces flowing to bring about the star's quick declension. After a hard fight, its ray was visible only over a small part of the earth, its enemies striving to deprive it of a place in the sky altogether, suceeding to some extent when the white star of Kolchak settled over Kazan, that of Ironside over Archangel, Yudenitch's close to Petrograd, that of Dunsterville over the oil wells of Baku, while the blood-red sun of Japan shone high over the city of Vladivostok. The oppressed peoples could no longer see the star in the sky, and their hearts were troubled. Rightly so, too, for the Red Star was the symbol of new thought born into the world. A new range of thought that would help to bring security and honor to all men; thought that had been struggling, struggling to come to life in the minds of great men and women, striving in the old time before ourselves, against hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Few saw but the fine, gentle and indomitable face of Lenin ashine in that Red Star, and there it was, indeed, plain for all to see, but further-seeing eyes saw many faces intermingled there behind the countenance of Lenin. Ay, thousands; those whose deeds for man's freedom of life and thought were sung in song, and told in story, with those who died a lonely death, unhonored and unsung.

So when the last interventionist had gone in the last ship from the Soviet shore; when the Red Cavalry, organized by Stalin, had stabled their horses in any old shack, or under any old bush, the people, surrounding the Bolshevik Party, looked over the land: a waste land, a land of woe, a land of terrible loneliness and desolation. Except themselves, they had saved nothing; nothing at all. Their enemies had stripped the ports of every steamer. "There were the landing-stages, overgrown with grass, on the fringe of a mournful sea; but there were no ships." No sail or jet of steam on the horizon anywhere gave any inkling of a ship's presence. Most of the railways in the land were twisted coils of metal; almost all the locomotives, rusty and broken, were lying lopsided where they had last come to a slow and panting halt, and the few serviceable ones left had no fuel with which to gather up strength to move again; the factories were still and mute, the walls dank with mildew, the once powerful machines furred thick all over with brown and haggard rust; and in the scattered and neglected farms there was but enough grain to furnish each hungering soul with a mouthful or two: there was nothing left but themselves. Nothing left, and *ex nihil nihil fit.* And



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the one trickle of color to be seen were the tattered, fluttering red flags flying resistantly over the weird wilderness of men and things.

But they had themselves; they were left, with all the terrible energy and spiritual strength that are in indomitable men and women. They had hope, and a resolution, hardened into unbreakable persistence through war and suffering, through the ideal of Lenin that had flowed into them, brimming over into an immense desire to force from this desolation a land of business and power, a land of pride and beauty. Out of next to nothing everything could come; it has to come; it must come. Read in Gladkov's *Cement* how Gleb Chumalov stepped nearer to the engineer, who thought he was about to be killed for what he had done, to say, tensely, "Comrade technologist, we've acted the fool long enough. We need heads . . . and hands. We've got to start things going! Just look at the factory, comrade technologist; what a giant and what a beauty! And to make this graveyard live again! To fire the furnaces once more, and make all these cables and power lines live again—it would be a miracle of construction! Coal and oil. Warmth and bread for the workers. The industrial revival of the Republic. . . . Over the mountains are great stacks of felled wood. We can bring it, not by horse-power, but by the mechanical power of the works. Thousands and millions of logs; loaded trucks; voluntary Sunday work; thousands of muscular hands and backs!" and Gleb seized the engineer by the shoulders and shook him in joyful excitement, while the engineer, like a scarecrow in the hands of Gleb, realized in the depths of his being that these dreadful hands, ingrained with death, had sternly and firmly attached him to life. Then the tingling ears of the engineer heard the voice of the worker striking at his thoughts again: "Well, comrade technologist, get your trains in hand, and we'll get to work. We'll build bigger things even than these. A new world, comrade technologist!"

A bewildering dream, this, to try to force from this wide desolation a land of productive bustle and power, a land of pride and beauty; to create a new world out of an old and withering one. It was no new dream: Omar Khayyam had dreamed it moodily, lying with his lass among the rose and hyacinth of a Persian garden; Finatan Lalor of Tenakill, in Leix, sent fiery words flying over Ireland, saying: "Let no people deceive themselves, or be deceived by the words, colors, phrases, and forms of a mock freedom, by constitutions, charters, articles and franchises. These things are paper and parchment, waste and worthless. Let laws and institutions say what they will, the fact will be stronger than all laws, and prevail against them—the fact that those who own your land will make your laws, and command your liberties and your lives. From the robber rights and robber rule that has turned us into slaves and beggars—deliverance or death—deliverance, or this island a desert." Further on, the great Abraham Lincoln gave to the peoples of the world the crowning slogan to the hope of man—Union—standing on the slopes of Gettysburg among the dead of the boys in blue lying close to their fallen foes, their brother-boys in Confederate grey; and Karl Marx watching everything, and counting up the reasons of poverty and plenty, of war and peace among the peoples, drilled the plentitude of facts together, gave them discipline, and marshalled them, a great army now, rank by rank and file by file, into a big book, whose wisdom, consciously or unconsciously, the Russian people were now putting firmly into the practice of life.

So when the cement factory had got into movement again, "Gleb pushed his helmet down over the back of his neck, dried the sweat on his face, and showing all his teeth in a merry smile, said, 'Well, what do you think of it, comrade technologist? Do you remember you said this job would take a month to get going, and now look, it's only the third day, and we've already got the works going'."

"With a dry smile, but allowing himself to break through the hard business tension to some extent, the engineer said, 'Yes, yes, with such a spate of energy it's possible to do wonders. But it is an uneconomical expenditure of strength. There is no graduation and organized division of labor. This enthusiasm is like a cloudburst: it doesn't last long and it's not very healthy.' With shining eyes, Gleb responded with, 'But it's a memorable fact, comrade technologist. With enthusiasm we can break up mountains. In the midst of ruin, that's the only way to begin. When we have put life into all this again, we can proceed to study the rational process of production'."

And Gleb was right: the feverish enthusiasm first, the planning afterwards, when the ruins had been cleared away. So feverish energy straightened out the rails, set them back in their place again, and hurrying hands hewed fuel to give the motionless locomotives panting life once more. The wild fever burned in the veins of all, building up and tumbling down—in factory, field and workshop; in science, in art and in literature, so that many foolish things were said and many foolish things were done; but it was a creative fever; not the fever of decadence that filled with cynicism and barren insolence the thought of the young and the little older in the rest of Europe.

There was Lenin and Stalin, backed

Jean Bart.



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by many fine comrades, gradually bringing sense and beauty to the turbulent activity, for these men were of the race of great dreamers which had given humanity its great and daring pioneers. And however the new activity might be frantic over new forms of art, however soberly it might preach of utilitarianism, of clean aprons, of hydro-electric dams, turbo-generators, yet it remained in the main stream of Russia's culture, and from it issued many great, noble and stately things in public health, unified endeavor, in the art of opera, cinema and poster painting; the gigantic achievement in the reclamation of the millions of waifs and strays, orphaned by the war and the civil strife, running wild and dangerously over the whole country, persuading them to come out of the maze of disorder and moral misery on to the road of life, and achievement—even if nothing else had ever been done—worthy of a reverent remembrance that would be everlasting. But more than this was done; for the Glebs and Dashas set about teaching each other to read and write so that the thoughts, the wisdom, the grandeur, and the songs of their great men and women should become an open book to the people.

THE Soviet Union, deliberately, and with malice aforethought, was put beyond the pale. She began to be "the enigma." The Soviet Union became a tainted nation to those who resented the conditions preventing man being exploited by man. They didn't see why man's inhumanity to man should be checked. It had worked well in the past, and would work better in the future. So the Soviet Union was hemmed in all round by armed enemies. They thought she would gradually die of loneliness. Near two hundred millions of people, burning with enthusiasm to make of their land a great land, to die of loneliness! Those hostile to Russia spoke of the dignity of the human soul, of the sacred right of the individual man, the divine privilege of man to worship God in perfect freedom. These things they spoke of, these things they lauded. But what was the genuine motive behind and below this beautiful blather? Sterling; shares.

A proof of it came within my own personal experience; I have it here in front of me now. It is a letter, dated the 19th of October, 1935, and it was sent to me by the secretary of "The Association of British Creditors of Russia." It says: "We notice with great interest that your name is associated as a patron with the Congress of Peace and Friendship with the USSR. While we, in common with all right-minded people, can share your hopes to secure better relations with the people of Russia, particularly on the artistic, dramatic and literary side, there does appear to us to be a very great obstacle standing in the way of perfect friendliness and concord between the peoples of this country and Russia. At present, there remains a very grave reason why warm relations do not exist between the two peoples. Several hundred thousand of British nationals, owners and shareholders in a number of undertakings, factories, mines, works, oilfields, etc. (which are at this moment enjoyed by Russia, and in fact constitute a large part of her wealth), experience an implacable dislike and distrust for all things Russian because of the action of the Soviet government confiscating their lawful undertakings in 1918." There you are: "implacable dislike," "lawful undertaking," and "distrust of everything Russian." No friendship because of the withholding of that which is the root of all kinds of evil. Two hundred and thirty millions of people to be at variance, maybe at war, because of a few hundred thousand wanting a pound of flesh.

They are ready to chant the Song of the Volga Boatmen, but none of them would go over to pull the boats; they were ready to lavish the wealth of factory and mine on themselves in gay clothes and rich food, but none of them would go over to put in an hour at a machine, or hew out a bucket of coal. The "large part of Russia's wealth" is justifying itself now far more than it did when it was in the hands of the few who never cared how bad the people lived so long as they themselves lived well. Sacred humanity! Well, the rising Red Star proclaims that the boatmen and miners there and here are sacred individuals, too, as precious to themselves and to their loved ones as any whose claims on life are counted in shares. Shares! Hear what uncomfortable words the great Dickens saith about these same shares: "It is well known to the wise in their generation that traffic in Shares is the one thing to have to do with in this world. Have no antecedents, no established character, no cultivation, no ideas, no manners; have Shares. Have Shares enough to be on Boards of Direction in capital letters, oscillate on mysterious business between London and Paris, and be great. Where does he come from? Shares. Where is he going to? Shares. What are his tastes? Shares. Has he any principles? Shares."

BUT the Soviet Union went on with the work of clearing away all pretense, all rubbish clogging the eager feet of her people, unafraid and unashamed. She worked day in and day out, solving the difficulties as they came along; and her first Five Year Plan enabled her people to stand firm on their feet, giving them a clear vision of what a second one could do. In the murky air of a strange hostility, the Red Star rose higher, visible to all who had eyes to see, high over the fence of malice, slander and mistrust. The big people in politics and industry turned their backs, refusing to see, and murmuring against this disturbing influence over other bodies; adding that it was but a common meteor, anyhow, and would fall to earth in dust before many moons had waned. And the Russians who came to us to speak for, and defend, this new light in the sky, found it hard to get a hearing. They lived for a long time in lonely places, and walked in lonely streets. But the friends of the Red Star grew in numbers, pointing out to the big men the far more dangerous brown and black influences whirling across everyone's orbit. Here and there, the Soviet flag was flown, and people began to be aware of the red banner with its star over the hammer and the sickle; a banner that has won the right to fly as high as the oldest and most noble flag seen among the nations. A few years ago, during an anniversary honoring Shakespeare, the flags of all nations flew from tall, colored standards set along the street in Stratford-on-Avon—all, but the flag of the Soviet Union, though no nation was doing so much to honor the poet by a superb parade of his plays in Soviet cities.

"See," says Emerson, the American philosopher, "see the power of the national emblems. Some stars, some lilies, others leopards, a crescent, a lion, or an eagle (my own country, Eire, sports a harp), which come into credit, God knows how, on an old rag of hunting blowing in the wind on a fort at the ends of the earth, shall make the blood tingle under the rudest or most conventional exterior." We know how the flag of the Soviets came into credit, and Everyman can read the simple



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symbols; simple, but of the most beautiful earth can give—the hammer, the sickle, and the star. The flag of the Soviet Union is the Soviet people's belief in themselves; their vision of how they began, what they are, and what they will become. In the folds of their flag is the work of their humblest citizen and the largest thing done by their brightest and best. It symbolizes what they are by their great deeds in war; by their greater deeds in peace.

The bad old days when fools tried to shut Stalin up in the Kremlin to bring out Hitler into the open—not that man, but Barrabas—are gone for ever. Nor prelate, priest, or politician (though some of each class will keep on trying), can now minimize the greatness of the Soviet Union. Long unchallenged in their lying yarns of a rotten Soviet army, that would yield to the first firm pressure of an opposing force; of a rotten system of life that would fall to pieces in the first adversity it encountered; the war waged by the Glebs and Dashas, the Ivans and the Raissas, in defense of country, constitution and life itself, has shown that the Soviet Union is in the forefront now of human life and human endeavor. And in me is the belief, as strong as the belief that I live, that the endeavor, the energy, the enthusiasm of the Soviet people will be but for the good of all men.

The other day, I took up a little picture-book, called *Russia's Story*, and found that my elder boy had written some comments beneath some of the pictures.

Under that of "Anna Bayeva, drilling machine operator, decorated for splendid work in making tubings for the Moscow subway," is the comment: "A fine lass. Unwomanly? No." Under the one showing Comrade Kienya, who is "a skilled engineer. She holds the Order of the Red Banner. Nearly one-third of the skilled industrial technicians of the Soviet Union are women. For them, marriage and childbirth are no longer financial burdens," is written, "Impossible in England." And under the picture showing the Red Army blowing up the Dnieper Dam, is written: "Even if the war went on for a thousand years, such a courageous and determined people would win in the end."

The young fellow is right. Youth everywhere is touched by the achievement of the Soviet Union. It is said that John of God, I think, was drunk with the love of God; youth is becoming drunk with the love of man; and the Soviet Union has led the way to the gay and upright tavern where the heady ale is stocked. The drums of youth are beating towards the assembly of one and all for a march forward to a useful, active and adventurous peace.

**"Partisans in the Woods," oil by Joseph LeBoit.**

**Courtesy ACA Gallery**



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# TROTSKY'S KAMPF

***"Trotsky's 'biography' of Stalin bears the imprimatur of a venal publisher; but the super-imprimatur . . . is that of the US State Department."***

## By V. J. JEROME

"IT IS impossible to displace him except by assassination. Every oppositionist becomes *ipso facto* a terrorist." (New York *American*, Jan. 26, 1937.)

"All political criticism is merely the first step toward the assassination of Stalin and his collaborators." (New York *American*, Feb. 5, 1937.)

These statements, issued to the Hearst press from a villa in Mexico, bore the signature of Trotsky.

The man who confessed (5,000 miles away from Moscow) to this "propaganda of the deed" did not hesitate in the same year to "explain" the confessions of his disciples and accomplices before the bar of Soviet justice as the effect of "drugs" and torture: "The GPU trials have a thoroughly inquisitorial character: that is the simple secret of the confessions!"

In an honest world such scoundrelism would be called by its name and its perpetrator considered by all beyond the pale of responsible utterance. But so corrupt is the bourgeois publishing world that this man, whose name will henceforth lead the list proverbially headed by Ananias and Benedict Arnold, is now brought forward as an "objective biographer." His attempt at assassinating Stalin's character after his foiled conspirings to assassinate Stalin in life is cynically presented between pretentious bookcovers as a work of "scholarship," an "invaluable legacy."

True, the book* has been fairly generally adjudged (to quote the ever-apt Shakespeare) a "most lame and impotent conclusion." Even some critics predisposed to do so found it hard to gild their opinions of this travesty on biography. Not out of consideration for their professional standing (such sensitivity in claqueurs of the Valtin-Barmine-Kravchenko hate-Russia barkers?), but out of a realization that no fanfare of "literary" criticism could muffle the roaring lies issuing from the book.

The reviews in the bourgeois press convey a general note of disappointment. In the words of one reviewer (New York *Wold-Telegram*), the book is "less a history or biography than a bitter, sometimes vituperative effort to discredit Stalin and his early career in detail." In the words of another reviewer (New York *Herald-Tribune*), "As biography this book is pretty bad." For still another reviewer (New York *Times*), "how authentic is such a biography is impossible to determine." Even a reviewer so eager to praise Trotsky as Edmund Wilson had to mute his enthusiasm with the apology, "It was thought that such a book could not fail to be a timely and lucrative exploit, but, like so many bright ideas of publishers, this turned out to be very much less sound than the author's own ideas for his work." (*New Yorker*.) Outspoken was the judgment of Frederick L. Schuman in *PM*: "That a man possessed by so unquenchable a hatred would balk at cooperating with fascists in his efforts to destroy the object of his wrath is scarcely conceivable."

It should not be assumed from this, however, that the "biography" will be consigned to limbo. The radio and the Associated Press were quick to take up the book as a "news" feature on the pretext of Trotsky's phantasmagoric charge (cold-shouldered or smiled at by the reviewers) that Stalin "poisoned" Gorky and Lenin. The Social-Democratic camp has gone to town on this "hot story" in the foulest of its gutter-press, the *Jewish Daily Forward*, where you can read spread across the columns "all about" how Stalin poisoned Lenin!

Max Lerner, in a "both-sided" *PM* review of the book, on the one hand agrees that today all utterances and acts of politicians and publicists must be tested by whether they strengthen or weaken Anglo-Soviet-American unity, and on the other hand rejects this test "when it is applied to writers and thinkers, to biographers and historians and reviewers. For while the statesman's obligation in a torn world is to unity, the thinker's obligation can only be to the pursuit of truth and the spirit of free inquiry."

Apparently unity for world peace is one thing, while "truth" is quite another. The mundane obligation to unity in a torn world must be left to the statesmen (the UN?), while we accord the higher obligation to truth to the thinkers and biographers, in which galaxy Trotsky shines!

Yet, if unity for peace is not at all, or necessarily, based on truth, *i.e.*, on an honest assessment of our present-day world and its needs, then wherefore the unity? If it is (as it must be) based on truth, then why the exemption from judgment for Trotsky and like "thinkers" and "biographers"?

Lerner might well ponder how in this instance the hand of politics rocks the cradle of "truth."

THE publication of this book must be seen within the larger scope of postwar political relations on a world scale in which Trotskyism comes to be more openly used as an anti-Soviet weapon in the service of imperialism. Trotsky's "biography" of Stalin bears the imprimatur of a venal New York publishing house; but the super-imprimatur, more patent than ink can impress, is that of the US State Department. The current anti-Soviet crusade, whose chief organizer in the UN is the State Department head, seeks to misdirect attention from the maneuverings and plottings for a new Hitlerite war and to detract from the high prestige of the Soviet Union and its leader, Stalin. This is the meaning of the signal from the State Department (more than hinted at in the press) for the issuance of the book, in reversal of its generally known intervention against its release at the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, when copies of the manufactured book had already been distributed to reviewers. ("Whether the present moment is any more suitable is problematical," comments one reviewer.)

There is none so naive as to believe

* STALIN, *by Leon Trotsky*. *Harpers*. $5.



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that the publication of such a book is motivated by concern for biography or history or literature. Rather, the collusion to publish this book, under the aegis of Washington, must be set down as the cynical subjugation of historiography and literature, in the manner of the Third Reich, to the world-dominating purposes of imperialism. In the crucial pre-Munich years the State Department concealed from our nation and the world the reports of Ambassador Davies on the trials of the Trotskyite-Bukharinite Fifth Column, when such revelations might have furthered US-Soviet cooperation in the interest of world peace. The same State Department, now intent on driving the world toward a new, atomic Munich, is assiduously bringing forward the identical Trotskyism by its essential sponsorship of this bogus biography. (Oblivious, Bourbon-like, to the lesson of history, it counts blissfully on faring better than did the imperialist Foreign Offices in Tokyo, Berlin and London, which expended funds and hopes so catastrophically on the Trotskyite agency.)

It is now clear for all to see that even when the State Department affirmed its "friendship" for the Soviet Union it was keeping anti-Soviet weapons in reserve against the day when, the glory of Stalingrad having receded into the ancient history of 1942, the dual-headed, gilded god of Anglo-American imperialism might once again put forth his hand to refashion in his image all the six-sixths of the world.

A "LIFE OF MARAT" from the traitor general Dumouriez might have matched the "objectivity" of this book.

The main source selected to document the discussion of Stalin's life in Georgia is the "memoirs" published in Berlin in 1932 by a former Menshevik who turned Nazi. Forced to note this fact, Trotsky nonetheless blandly assures us that "It would be an error to assume that as an exile and a political enemy Iremashvili tries to belittle Stalin's figure." (Indeed, Trotsky gives us a like assurance regarding himself, in the "biography," that he bears no hatred toward Stalin!) And so, what can serve the interest of objectivity better than "to lean upon Iremashvili's reminiscences?" At the same time, all writings on Stalin's life by biographers other than anti-Communists are rejected outright as "biased," while "Iremashvili's recollections are incomparably . . . closer to the truth." (By what objective standards?)

Trotsky's choice of a Nazi source has its inner logic. There is to this "biography" a perverse unity of form and substance. The propaganda has sought out its inalienable method. It is the technique of Goering's preparations for the Reichstag fire: the technique of the Monstrous Lie.

The Monstrous Lie sets out, fundamentally, to deny Stalin's place in history. It tries desperately to nullify his role, as co-worker with Lenin, in the building of the Bolshevik Party which led the working class to victory in the October Revolution. It attempts to belittle, indeed obliterate, his place in the lifework of Lenin, and his lion-like guardianship of the science of Marxism-Leninism, which he deepened to meet the new historic needs. It presents Trotskyism in a Leninist mask and slanders as Lenin's "enemy" the theoretician, strategist and organizer of the socialist society and its defense. It would conceal Lenin's respect for his greatest disciple, who fought alongside him against all purveyors of enemy ideology in "Marxist" caskets. Stalin is a man whose Bolshevik stamina was forged in the crucible of revolutionary experience, earning for him the attribute of his name—the Steeled One.

The Monstrous Lie beats vainly against the Granite Truth: for in Stalin the world sees reflected the stature of the Soviet Union.

To sully the life-record of Stalin and the achievements of the Soviet Union, the "objective biography" under discussion leaves no method, however vile, unused.

The ideological foundation of Trotsky's deal with Alfred Rosenberg and Rudolph Hess for the assistance of the Reichswehr to bring him to power, as proved in the trials of his confederates, is revealed in Trotsky's opening attack on Stalin with the argument of racism drawn from the same "scientific" cesspool from which Rosenberg and Hess drew theirs.

Thus we are ushered into a disquisition on the "Asiatic" characteristics of the Caucasus, of Georgia in particular, and of Stalin. Not only are we given "the so-called Southern type, which is characterized by lazy shiftlessness and explosive irascibility," but, by cited "authority," "the Georgians were not only slovenly and shiftless, but less intelligent than the other Caucasians." To top it all, "the frequent bloody raids into the Caucasus of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane left their traces" not only on the Georgian nation, but "likewise on the character of Stalin."

What the fascist Senator Bilbo does for the Negro people in America's South, Trotsky does for the Caucasian peoples in Russia's South. What better "proof" does one need of the essential "inferiority," "barbarity" and "unfitness" of the Soviet Union led by the "Asiatic" Georgian, Stalin? No better "basic theory" can be demanded by the practitioners of atomic imperialism in the council halls of the United Nations.

THE colossal chauvinism of Trotsky, which permeates the book, can perhaps be further exemplified by the "interpretation" (contemptuous of Lenin, as of Stalin) that we are given of Lenin's reference to Stalin, in a letter to Gorky, as "a splendid Georgian." Trotsky's slur is: "He had in mind, of course, not a Georgian, but a Caucasian: the element of primitiveness undoubtedly attracted Lenin."

And this "primitiveness," the "biography" gives us to understand, explains the choice of Stalin as Peoples' Commissar of Nationalities! (From an attribute of the Caucasians only, "primitiveness," it would seem, now becomes extended to the non-Great Russian nationalities generally.) Thus Trotsky the rascist: ". . . aboriginality was in his very blood. He loved the society of primitive people, found a common language with them, was not afraid they would excel him in anything. . . ."

The fact that Stalin, upon fleeing from exile, should have returned from Siberia directly to Tiflis, instead of joining the revolutionaries abroad, is for the "objective biography" further proof that Stalin was "a Caucasian and a congenital provincial."

Stalin's repeated returns to his home terrain (which the "biography" mocks as "native haunts") signified that he was a son of his people, a revolutionary rooted in the people. Trotsky could not understand this. In what was *he* rooted? Trotsky, the decadent, petty-bourgeois intellectual, was rooted in the marsh of declining Western European capitalism and shone with its phosphorescence.

Not only Georgia and the Caucasus, but all Russia was held in contempt by this inveterate enemy of the people. His attitude of disdain and hostility



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**"Oh, Leon, answer us! What do we say now?"**

toward the peasantry—his proclaimed "negation" of the role of the peasantry —was a cardinal "principle" of his undying opposition to Leninism. Students of Marxism will remember the counter-revolutionary propaganda of "Europeanizing" the Russian labor movement which Trotsky in common with the Mensheviks waged in the years of revolutionary revival (1912-14). He aimed at liquidating Bolshevism and setting up a new labor party that would accommodate itself to the Stolypin regime, a labor party polluted with the opportunism and reformist parliamentarism of Western Social-Democracy, which so shortly afterwards was to reveal itself as social-imperialism. The very epithets "Asiatic" and "barbaric" [illegible] now find levelled in the "biography" against Lenin's successor were past levelled by Trotsky at Lenin Leninists.

Lenin, in an article in *Zviezda*, exposed Trotsky's arrogant "Europeanism" as the rejection of the revolutionary tasks confronting the Russian labor movement, as "the day-dream of an opportunist intellectual."

THE entire "objective biography" is an unceasing torrent of deprecation and slander directed toward the belittlement of Stalin. Let Iremashvili, in an off moment, commit himself to a stray observation favorable to Stalin's character—as when he ascribes to the youthful Joseph at the seminary the trait of rebelliousness—and Trotsky will stop his fascist oracle in mid-text, so to speak, to charge him with a "lapse of memory."

The intellectual and moral-political level of the "biography" can be gauged by the following examples, with which the text abounds:

Trotsky tries to nullify Stalin's part in the Fifth Party Congress which met at London in May, 1907. As final proof: "I first learned about Stalin's presence at the London Congress from Souvarine's book. . . ."

In Trotsky's "Introduction" we read the demagogic assurance: "The author did not overlook a single fact, document, or bit of testimony redounding to the benefit of the hero of this book."

In 1907, nearly thirty years before the appearance of Souvarine's scurrilous biography, Stalin published his "Notes of a Delegate"—an authoritative assessment of the decisions and results of the London Congress, which bespoke the active participation of its author at that momentous gathering.

In that document Stalin evaluated the historic significance of the Congress —the victory of Bolshevism over Menshevism in the Russian labor movement—which he summed up in the statement:

"The actual unification of the advanced workers of all Russia into a single all-Russian party under the banner of *revolutionary* Social-Democracy —that is the significance of the London Congress, that is its general character."

The signal defeat of Menshevism included the failure of Trotsky's efforts to set up a semi-Menshevik, Centrist, bloc at the Congress. That fact is passed in silence in the "biography."

Stalin's six escapes from exile (preceding his final liberation by the February Revolution) "were not escapes in the true sense of the word, but simply unlawful departures"!

By the same logic, the fact that on the eve of the October Revolution the contact of the Central Committee with Lenin was maintained through Stalin, receives the "explanation" that "he was one of those in whom the police showed not the slightest interest"!

And to prove further that between Lenin and Stalin there was really no closeness, no comradeship-in-arms, we have only to read in the "objective biography" that if Lenin waited three days for Stalin's return to the capital in order to work out jointly with him the strategy and tactics for the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations, it was merely because "Stalin had more free time than all the other members of the Politburo"!

For full measure, we get the accusation of anti-Semitism levelled at



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Stalin. Who is the man that makes this charge? One whose fiendish desire for the destruction of the Soviet Union brought him and his associates into the fascist scheme for the enslavement of all peoples, Jews and non-Jews alike! One whose consuming hatred for the free, socialist Soviet Union led him to join into collusion with those whose hands have exterminated six million Jews! And this creature charges with anti-Semitism the man who, with Lenin, in teaching and policy, brought about the transformation of the one-time classic land of pogroms into the great socialist fraternity of free and equal nations and peoples, among whom the Jews are truly brothers, with anti-Semitism a crime by law.

TOM THUMB was a towering giant compared to the vanishing point to which the stature of Stalin is reduced in this book. Yet this "biography" is not without its assignment of grandiosity: detracting the subject, it bloats the "recorder." For unspeakable arrogance and Mussolinian self-magnification, there never was an autobiography so mistitled "biography."

Upon the outbreak of the February Revolution, Stalin, liberated from exile in Siberia, left for Petrograd. A telegram from Perm, signed jointly by Stalin with two others, informed Lenin in Switzerland of their departure for the revolutionary capital. Trotsky holds up a trump card to the reader: "Stalin signed last." And how did Stalin enter Petrograd? Modesty bids Trotsky invoke a fellow-"biographer": "[Stalin] was not greeted, as two months later Trotsky . . . had been, by a deputation . . . which carried him on its shoulders. He arrived without a sound and without any noise, and sat down to work."

This man, who arrived *without a sound and without any noise, and sat down to work,* was on the day of his arrival in Petrograd entrusted by the Central Committee of the Party with the editorship of *Pravda.*

"When I arrived in Petrograd at the beginning of May, I hardly remembered Stalin's name."

Trotsky's exalted forgetting echoes the irony of another's failure to remember. Fact and fiction blend here. In the famed story by Anatole France, the Procurator of Judea, whose name was Pontius Pilate, in later life could not call to mind, during a supper-hour conversation at his Baiae villa, the name of a certain provincial from Galilee.

On Stalin's role in the Great Socialist Revolution the book has this to offer: "The biographer, no matter how willing, can have nothing to say about Stalin's participation in the October Revolution. Nowhere does one find mention of his name. . . ."

The protocols and documents of the Party show that at the Sixth Party Congress, held in secret in August 1917, which inaugurated the preparations for armed insurrection, Stalin delivered the political report of the Central Committee, as well as the report on the political situation.* (The "biography" admits this.) He likewise submitted the resolution on the conquest of power. In adopting the resolution, the Congress rejected the Trotskyite "amendment" that Russia could be directed toward socialism only "in the event of a proletarian revolution in the West."

The record is inexpungeable that on October 16, an enlarged meeting of the Central Committee elected a Party Center, headed by Stalin, to assume practical direction of the uprising. This Party Center, forming part of the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, became the leading core of that organization. The plan for the uprising, as well as its timing, was determined under the guidance of Stalin. On October 24 (November 6, new calendar), on Stalin's order, Red Guards and revolutionary soldiers forced back Kerensky's armored cars. An hour later Stalin wrote the instant call in the Party's central organ for the overthrow of the Provisional Government.

HISTORY records instances of men who, faced with obstinate facts embarrassing to their professions of truth, have resorted to arduous labors in order to remove the appearance of those irremovable facts. One calls to mind the "villages" built by Prince Potemkin along the route of Catherine II's famous expedition to the South, to provide "factual" evidence of the prosperity and happiness of the people under his notorious maladministration.

But Trotsky resorts to no such labors. The artful dodge will do the trick. Abracadabra, presto changeo—and there is no Party Center! ". . . there never was any such 'center'." "At the October sixteenth conference of the Central Committee," the "biography" states, "with some of the leading Petrograd Party organizers it was decided to organize 'a military revolutionary center' of five Central Committee members." But this Center, Trotsky "explains" contemptuously, was just a "center on a piece of paper," "a resolution hastily written by Lenin in a corner of the hall."

One can only invoke Lenin's judgments: "Trotsky has been deceiving the workers in a most unprincipled and shameless manner," he declared in 1911. In 1914 Lenin wrote: "The old participants in the Marxian movement in Russia know Trotsky's personality very well, and it is not worth while talking to them about it. . . . The young generation of workers must know very well with whom it has to deal, when incredible pretensions are made by people who absolutely do not want to consider *either* the Party decisions . . . *or* the experience of the present-day labor movement in Russia. . . ."

One is indeed hard put to it not to degrade oneself and the reader by arguing on the level provided in the "biography." One is reminded of Lenin's exclamation in discussing Trotsky's utterances: "Really, reading such things we involuntarily ask ourselves whether these voices emanate from a lunatic asylum."

But there's method to the madness.

It is the method—as the trials of the Trotskyites and Bukharinites brought to light—of the vanguard of the imperialist powers, of their ideological arms purveyor and tactical mentor, for the destruction of the Soviet state.

It is the method of confusing, disuniting and demoralizing the labor movement and the democratic forces generally with slogans sounding of revolution but bearing the poison of counter-revolution against the Workers' State, as well as against the working-class and colonial peoples' movements throughout the world.

It is the method of the Monstrous Lie. And the house of the Monstrous Lie is fitted for the key of treason.

Trotskyism was an agency for preparation of World War II. Today it is an agency of the imperialist planners for the most destructive of all wars. And as such Trotskyism must be destroyed.

* Lenin, hounded by the Provisional Government, was unable to attend the Congress.



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# THE GAP IN MEMORY

## A Radio Script by JAMES E. SCHEVILL

*Note: "The Gap in Memory" can be performed with one voice reading the entire script, or with several voices and music as indicated.*

(*Music*)

ANNOUNCER:

Memory is timeless,
Does not exist on the face of a clock
Or in the living sound of a footstep;

Yet there is a gap in our memory,
An image that haunts our dreams,
An uneasy episode like a filthy room
in which we have lived,
An evil word whose spelling we would forget.

The word is Spain.

Do you remember?

VOICE:

*Unfortunate, wasn't it?*

ANNOUNCER:

And with these words go home
Out of the isolated night,
Away from the caverns of memory,
Forget——

(*Music*)

ANNOUNCER:

Now we, the living exiles from memory,
Enter the easy apartment room at night
Saying:

VOICE:

"Turn down the light."

ANNOUNCER:

"Turn down the light"
(Meaning the conscience of guilt
Which shines in our dreams with its white face)
Saying,

VOICE:

"We did not know.
The decision was not up to us.
Our homes were secure.
How could we risk our security?"

ANNOUNCER:

Secure?

The bones of Maidanek laugh,
The corpses of Buchenwald give their silent answer,
The graves on Bataan shine with mockery in the sun,
While the names of Stalingrad, Sevastopol, Normandy,
Salerno, and North Africa are freshly engraved in irony
in the history books.

VOICE:

*Unfortunate, wasn't it.*

ANNOUNCER:

But the mirror of history gives us the answer,
Eye to eye,
There was the future in miniature
And we turned away.
The uniforms were clearly marked,
The sides drawn up
And the stakes plainly in view.
The Spanish sky was marked with omens
And prophets from all countries
Enlisted in the International Brigades.
The price was not gold or territory
But the peace of the world
And we turned away.

(*Music*)

VOICE:

*But it's over and done with now.*
*Let the episode rest in history.*

ANNOUNCER:

The cure of guilt is not evasion
And the episode is not ended.
There is tension in the houses of Spain.
The firing squads are not forgotten.
The Spanish graves are not silent.
There was a poet the world remembers.
His name was Lorca and once
He jokingly said that he was
A Catholic, Communist, Anarchist,
Libertarian, Traditionalist and Monarchist
All at the same time, which was merely
His way of saying he was a Spaniard.
He was murdered by Franco's Civil Guard
Because he saw their terrorist face and wrote:

VOICE:

"Black are their horses
and black their horses' hooves.
Upon their capes stains
of ink and wax glisten.
Because their skulls are made
of lead they do not weep.
With patent leather souls
they come down the road."

(*Music*)

ANNOUNCER:

No, the dead are not silent.
The voice of the poet cannot be stilled.
The voices of the dead in Spain
Still wait for the inner voice of justice.
And with each sun that sets on the Spanish land
A prayer is chanted for the spirit of Lorca and the dead
Who fought for the life of Spain:

VOICE:

Here lies the soul of Spain
Guarded by the rain.
In the center of this ground
Listen to the living sound.
On the freedom of this death
Lay the final wreath.
From their graves shall flower
Spanish freedom in its future hour.

(*Music*)

VOICE:

*But the dead are dead.*
*There is no one to carry on.*



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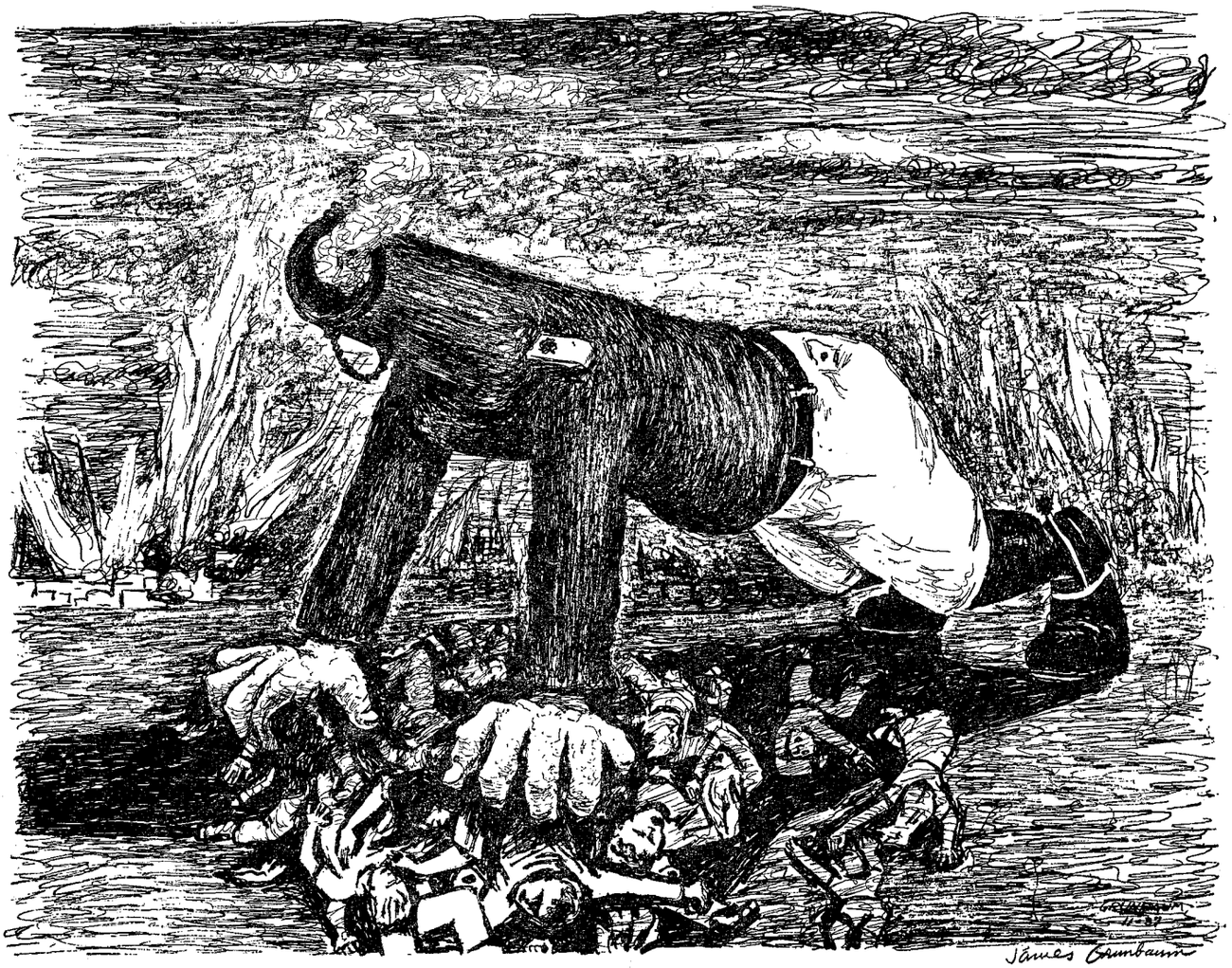


**"Non-intervention: Spain, 1937," by James Grunbaum.**

ANNOUNCER:

The words twist in the night of memory.
No one to carry on?
Are we to forget so soon?
Have we forgotten the Spanish exiles?
The thousands of so-called "displaced" persons
Who survived German concentration camps
And forced labor on the trans-Saharan railroad
And the broken houses of exile
In many an alien country?
Can these people be forgotten?

And the living in Spain.
Have you heard of any new freedoms
They have been offered?
Is there freedom of speech, of religion, of education?

No,
The mirror of history again gives us the answer.
The innocent shall not suffer while the guilty escape.
The fate of the world rests
In the simple belief in humanity,
Faith in the brotherhood of men.
Behind the mask of secrets between nations lies disaster,
The failure of economic unity,
The failure of world organization,
And the molten face of future war.

(*Music*)

ANNOUNCER:

Now again the choice is clear.
The hour with its heavy hand
Calls for the united action.
Freedom cannot be purchased.
It is a debt owed to the living.
It is a debt owed to the dead.

VOICE:

The parliament with the representatives
Elected by the people
Must sit again in Madrid,
The shining military uniforms disappear
And with them shall vanish the sabres of fear.

VOICE:

The places of assembly must again be filled
With those who desire to meet in peace,
Then the pomp and ceremony shall melt
And work replace the decorations of felt.

VOICE:

The hospitals and colleges must once more open
To the knowledge and thought of the world,
The exiled scholars and creators of Spanish culture
Return to the halls which now are bound
With the hollow echoes of military sound.

VOICES:

Then the Spanish republic will live again
Though it waits now behind a wall of black rain.

(*Music*)



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# THE USSR AND ARGENTINA

## *An Editorial by FREDERICK V. FIELD*

THE key to understanding the problem of Argentina today lies less in the internal politics of that country or in the nature of the Peron government than in the nature and policies of the United States. Since the death of President Roosevelt the international situation has changed drastically for the worse and it is only in terms of this change, resulting from the destructive role now being played by American imperialism, that the recent recognition of the Peron government by the Soviet Union can be understood.

The cardinal fact in the situation today is that the United States is the most dangerously aggressive nation in the Western Hemisphere. A year ago, when Big Three cooperation and the Good Neighbor Policy were still fairly intact, it was the fascist threat emanating from Peron's Argentina that constituted the most serious menace to international security in the Western Hemisphere. At the present time, however, not only has the deliberate ineptness of North American diplomacy solidified the position of the Argentine demagogue, but by discarding all the democratic concepts of the Roosevelt period the United States has embarked on a road of world domination which by comparison makes the blusterings of Peron insignificant.

Soviet foreign policy, as is well known, is practical and realistic. It reacts to concrete facts and specific situations. The recent opening of diplomatic and economic relations with Argentina is in keeping with that tradition. The objective of Soviet foreign policy is to provide security for the Soviet Union by contributing to an international security system and by combatting those forces and influences which threaten it. Soviet-Argentine relations are also a part of that pattern.

It was a little over a year ago that the United States made one of its first overt moves against Big Three unity and on behalf of American-British world hegemony. At San Francisco the American government bludgeoned the Latin American nations and others into admitting Peron's fascist government into the United Nations. The Soviet Union led the unsuccessful opposition. In taking this position the Soviet Union was fighting for world security in the context of the concrete world situation which existed at that time.

In recognizing the same Peron government today the Soviet Union is not reversing itself; on the contrary, it is reflecting an international scene which —largely because of North American imperialist aggression—has itself radically changed. The struggle for world security, which in April 1945 required the isolation of the Peronistas, in June 1946 requires the weakening of the Anglo-American imperialist bloc. Soviet policy has been consistent. The policy of the United States, on the other hand, in repudiating the Roosevelt principles and adopting crass anti-Soviet, anti-democratic positions, has been reversed.

Argentine fascism in April 1945, moreover, was a far more dangerous potential than it is today—and this point is pertinent regardless of the re-emergence of aggressive United States imperialism. Fourteen months ago Peron was a Western Hemisphere image of Hitlerism in Europe. The strength and danger of Argentine fascism was enhanced by Nazism in Europe. Today, Hitlerism has been vanquished and Peron is an image of an institution reduced to ashes. Peron's European base is now narrowed down to Franco Spain, and if the latter can be destroyed, as the Soviet Union advocates, Peron will be reduced to a dim image indeed.

Edith Miller.

In no sector of the world is the reversal of the United States' wartime policies more evident than in Latin America. In this hemisphere the reaction stemming from Wall Street to which the Truman administration has made itself altogether subservient is riding roughshod over all that is basic to international security and democracy. While sneering at the mere opening of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Argentina the Truman government is trying to create a military alliance with all the Latin American nations, including Argentina! The Soviet answer to this new situation is to endeavor to make its democratic influence felt in Latin America as elsewhere in the world. The recognition of the Peron government is one way of dealing with the threat of North American imperialism throughout the world.

There is no more inconsistency between the Soviet attitude toward Peron a year ago and now than there is between the USSR's demand for isolating Franco Spain and at the same time opening relations with Peron. Both Peron and Franco are fascists. Whereas the latter can and must be dealt with in the context of a democratic upsurge in Europe which holds the possibility of joint action to crush his regime, Peron must be dealt with in the context of a hemisphere in which the overriding threat comes from Washington. A dialectical approach calls for isolating Spanish fascism and for cooperating with the Argentine people (despite their form of government) against United States imperialism.

Few events of recent months give a clearer insight into the world situation, a sharper warning of the danger of the Truman administration's foreign policies, than the arrangement between the USSR and Argentina. Instead of being stupidly denounced, as the imperialist press is doing, that arrangement must be examined and understood as a concrete move to meet a very specific and highly dangerous situation, the onus for which rests upon America's rulers.



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# THE THEATER AS A WEAPON

***A playwright discusses the stage today; the best theater is an arena "where issues are decided and there's no such thing as neutrality."***

**By ARNAUD D'USSEAU**

I'LL begin by saying rather categorically that whenever the theater's been worth anything at all, it's been a weapon. Sometimes—as with Ibsen's *A Doll's House*—it's been a steelcapped bullet aimed right at the heart of middle-class marriage. Or sometimes—as with Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*—it's been a stiletto, so sharp and finely tempered the middle class did not realize the blade was between its ribs until it was dying.

But always the best theater has been a weapon. It's never shied away from taking sides—from swapping ideological blows—from dealing with so-called problems, so-called controversies. Sometimes it's chosen to deal with such material subtly. Sometimes it's soaked the sawdust with blood. But always it's remembered the theater is essentially an arena, and like all arenas a place where issues are decided and there's no such thing as neutrality.

That, however, is not the question we face: whether or not the theater is a weapon. Most of us already know that very well. It's a concept to which we've subscribed for a long time. What we don't know so well is this: how can we take this idea of the theater as a weapon and make it work? How can we take something which has become blunt, rusty and all but useless during the past six years of war and reforge it into something barbed and effective, capable of laying the enemies of progress and mankind low? How can we get plays on the boards that will return the theater to its best tradition—that will begin really to challenge audiences, override the mischief of the critics, and yes—why not say it—change the world?

Well, I have no magic answers. I don't believe there are any. At the same time, I refuse to surrender this concept of the theater as a weapon in favor of the "pure entertainment" advocates. The times are much too urgent—the stakes are much too high. Moreover, a lot of these plays which are supposed to be "strictly entertaining" are not as entertaining as their sponsors would like to think. It's amazing, these days, how many plays devoid of content simply end up as corn.

On the other hand, I refuse to share the pessimism of so many about the future of the theater. I feel there's a psychology of failure among certain groups which must be guarded against. All right, I admit it: the critics aren't all that we would like; the majority of Broadway managers are chiefly out to make a dollar; and it is only the Park Avenue audience that can afford $4.80 for a ticket. But does this warrant a despair so great that we must automatically assume that only the show that fails has any real artistic merit, and the one that succeeds and draws steady audiences is immediately suspect? If so, then we must fail to praise a show like *On the Town* or *Call Me Mister*, and rather arbitrarily put a good play like *Born Yesterday* in the same category with a very bad play like *O Mistress Mine*.

For one thing, I think we must understand clearly the present economic position of our theater. It's not good. Competition is cut-throat and the rising cost of real estate is making the average producer's job increasingly difficult. He's having a hard time developing talent, then holding on to it. His directors and writers go to Hollywood, and many of his actors depend on the radio for a livelihood. Radio training is about the worst thing a stage actor can get. At the same time, an actor must eat.

You will also hear frequent complaints about the unions. In fact, there are one or two who are convinced the unions alone are responsible for the theater's present lack. This is not so. The unions in the theater play much the same role they do in steel, in lumber or in the making of lampshades. They guarantee protection for their workers in an economic setup where, if they didn't, the electrician and the property man would be helpless and misused. No, the economic ills of the theater—like those of capitalism itself—are caused by something other than the unions' effort to protect wages.

THE economic picture is not good. But at the same time, it's not hopeless. The theater has one compensating economic advantage and it is this: the theater is still relatively free from the curse of monopoly. It's not as free as it was twenty years ago—it's not as free as many of us would like—but unlike the movies and the radio there's not yet a complete monopoly on ideas, nor a complete rationalization of talent. In the theater, little business still survives. Thirty thousand dollars is a lot of money, but a producer still can get it for a show that strikes out.

I don't mean by this that the artist in the theater is without certain defined limitations. All artists face limitations within the present structure of society, apart from the limitations of their own talent. But compared with other media, the theater is economically fortunate.

If this is so, and I believe it is, then we must work to protect and extend this economic advantage. We must fight for legislation that will uphold the rights of the independent theater owner as opposed to the theater owner who owns twenty theaters and uses this power to stifle all creative initiative and impose reactionary standards. We must support amateur publishing companies which offer competition to a powerful firm like Samuel French. We must insist upon tax exemptions, through state legislation and otherwise, for young experimental groups and for veterans' organizations planning to enter the theater.

Many of us remember the Federal Theater and lament its passing. We recall the upsurge of ideas and talent that occurred throughout the country and believe that another theater under government sponsorship is one of the major solutions to the theater's problems. But in addition to fighting for a



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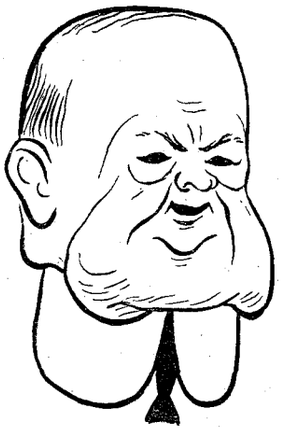
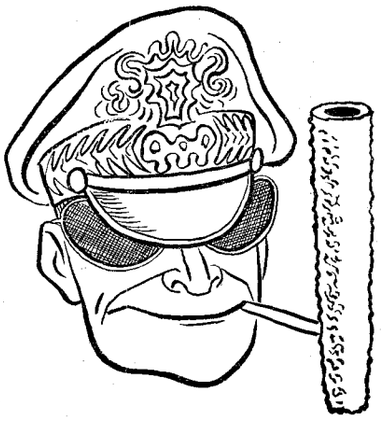
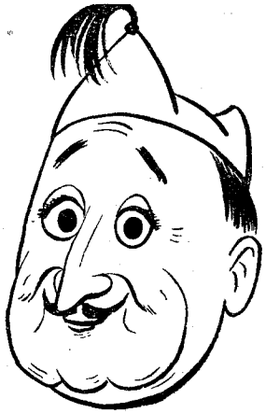
# Tune-types: NM's Hit Parade



"Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else but Me."



"If I Had My Way."



"Please Don't Talk About Me."

Federal Theater, it seems to me that we've got to work within the present framework. We've got to resist every move that will tend to trustify the theater—a thing which a good many people would like to have happen. We have the basis for a real struggle here and we must not fail to seize it.

Our present theater has a second advantage which we must recognize. During the past six years of war—with very few exceptions—the new plays have been pretty dismal affairs. We've had good musicals, wonderful musicals; but not good plays. However, prior to the last war, there were twenty years of activity and growth in the American theater. And this activity and growth have provided us with a tradition.

As is well known, the American theater came of age after World War I. With such excellent plays as *What Price Glory, Craig's Wife, Beyond the Horizon, Processional, The Silver Cord* and *The Front Page*, a new and vigorous realism was born. Passions and ideas were expressed which previously had been ignored. And though some of the passions were purple, and some of the ideas not very profound, they gave our theater a welcome vitality and freshness. If they were not controversial politically, they were aesthetically.

The Thirties, too, were an advance. Against the giant backdrop of the depression and the New Deal and the threat of a second war, the esthetic realism the theater won in the Twenties was given a social direction. We had the birth of vigorous groups represented most conspicuously by the Group Theater, the Theater Union and ultimately the Federal Theater. Characters in plays were placed more clearly in relationship to their environment. A sharper distinction began to exist in the playwright's mind between social good and evil. And not only were social tensions portrayed, but playwrights sought to provide poetically some of the underlying reasons for those tensions, and we had fine plays from such writers as Paul Green, John Howard Lawson, Robert Sherwood, S. N. Behrman, Lillian Hellman and Clifford Odets, among many others.

This is not to say the Thirties gave the theater all it needed. Those years are still sufficiently close for most of us to know better. There were many disappointments, much frustation, and not a little ill-will. Many of the plays —sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously—evaded the basic implications of their social themes. Many of our playwrights shared the confusion of the characters they put upon the stage. So did the actors that were asked to perform them. But for all the confusion, whether they professed themselves liberals or humanists or Marxists, a majority of our artists in the theater began consciously to develop this idea of the theater as a weapon.

The advantage this tradition affords seems to me important and one we should be prepared to use. After World War I, there was no such tradition. But today there is, and if we're vigilant —if we're alert—we can avoid numerous mistakes and improve on much that has gone before.

Those working in the theater have a third advantage, which provides us with a third cause for optimism. Some may not believe it, or accept it only instinctively. But the fact is that it exists, and is as important as the above two factors I've mentioned.

Today our knowledge of the world in which we live is much greater. We're not as innocent as we once were, thank heavens. A war, a depression and another war have taught us something about the laws of social change. To the average citizen such knowledge is valuable. To the artist it is indispensable. By knowing where society is going—who its enemies are, and who its friends—the artist is given his bearings. He is provided with a North Star, and is not someone wandering around in a wilderness. This not only makes it easier for him to take sides, but it provides him with that temporary tranquillity he must have if he's going to function at all effectively.

Such knowledge invariably deepens his work. A good play may be written and performed without a profound insight into society, but never a great play. If we go outside the American tradition, to glance only briefly at the great European tradition of the last seventy-five years, we find that not only did the great playwrights have a profound knowledge of character and human behavior, but within limitations they sensed class forces as well. Ibsen, Chekov and Shaw, each in his own way, revealed the contradictions of society through the characters he created. It was one of the basic sources of their greatness.

I said at the beginning I didn't believe there were any magic answers, and I still don't think so. But perhaps



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**Illustrated by James Turnbull.**

"People Will Say We're in Love." "Out of Nowhere."

if we work to improve the economic status of the theater; if we begin consciously to study our traditions; and if we keep constantly alert to what is happening in the world—then perhaps we can make the theater the weapon we desire and which our society so much needs.

To do all these things at once is a very big order, I know. And it's certainly not something any one person can do alone—nor something the theater can do alone. But perhaps it's something that all of those who are interested in our cultural future can do together—with forums such as these, with debates, with articles, with books and with scholarship.

Recently, as you all know, there's been much discussion about "art as a weapon." We want to put certain ideas in order; we also want to try to understand the reasons for certain failures, certain dissatisfactions. I think one reason is that we've ignored this need for scholarship, for ferment, and as a consequence we've felt our lines of supply grown attenuated and in some cases broken off. Thus, instead of insisting upon the concept of "art as a weapon" with greater imagination and force, some of us have thought to abandon it. What we've got to do is go back, understand more fully our sources of inspiration, and draw from them every possible idea and insight that will serve us. We must become utilitarians, not in a narrow sense, but broadly—dialectically, if you will.

Today if we're utterly serious about this business of making the theater a weapon again we need to reassert a healthy respect for theory. We need, too, to learn technique. Technique in any battle is of the essence. We can all have the right ideas, we can all be wonderfully brave, but unless we have the knowledge of how to use our weapons skillfully, we're as dead as the Japanese that once populated Hiroshima.

Through forums, discussions, books, articles and debates; and finally with the production of plays, we must work to build our strategic reserves. That was one of the failings of the social drama in the Thirties—it had few strategic reserves. It had to create its weapons and supplies as it fought—live, as it were, off the countryside. Too many plays were topical dramas for limited objectives. Too many opening nights became "battles of the bulge"—a hasty mobilizing of ideas and talent thrown into the breach to stem a reactionary counterattack along a given front.

WELL, when you have to fight this way, when you have no alternative, you do. But it's not a good way to fight. It's certainly not fighting with maximum effectiveness, but sniping from foxholes and from behind the walls of broken buildings. It's not bringing all your combined force and striking power together, so the enemy will feel your full strength in one crushing blow.

After the First World War, it took the theater in America four or five years to become clearly aware of its direction. After this war, it may take the same length of time. But I believe we already have certain encouraging indications of where we are going—that already the weapon is being made effective.

It is significant that in this current season a majority of our playwrights —the new ones as well as the old ones —have sought to deal directly with some of the tensions that are gripping our postwar world. We have had plays that have sought to reflect the nature of the war—the nature of the peace —the nature of American imperialism. We've also had plays about race and religious prejudice, and, in two cases, about politics as it's unhappily practiced by certain elements in America.

Not all these plays have been successful—though some deserved to be more successful than they were. But all of them, it seemed to me, indicated a belief on the part of the playwright, producer, director, scene designer and actors that it was the business of the theater to mirror at least a part of the drama that is in our daily lives. In the first season after World War II, it can be said the theater in America at least attempted to deal with more significant material than it did during all the years of actual conflict.

How can this trend be encouraged? I have cited what I believe to be a number of the requirements, but there's one more that should be mentioned, if only briefly. The question is frequently raised: why can't audiences be organized and made to support plays which deserve to be successful? Why can't audience responsibility and participation aid in making the theater a weapon?

The answer is that it can; indeed, that it must. Audience participation is of the essence if we're to have real theater again in this country. No theater has ever thrived without it. However, we must be careful not to have any illusions on this score or in any way minimize the difficulties involved. Good plays always have had the prob-



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**"It's me, it's me, it's me, O Lord, Standing in the need of prayer."**

lem of reaching audiences. It's a fact that most of Shakespeare's rather indifferent comedies did better at the box-office than *Othello* or *Hamlet;* and Shakespeare was at the ticket window to check the receipts himself. Shaw's early plays rarely ran more than a week. And today, of course, the competition is much keener, with the price of admission so high that many people who would honestly like to support the theater find it difficult. Wide audience support was given *Home of the Brave,* but the fact remains the producer lost $60,000 trying to keep this good play open. Ten thousand people in an audience organization may seem like a lot of people; actually, this number would be doing well if it kept a play running for a month on Broadway—which is not enough time for a show at minimum cost and budget to break even.

I don't wish to be pessimistic about this question of audience participation; at the same time, I feel we must be wary of an over-enthusiasm that omits definite practical considerations. There are one or two promoters floating around who are selling this idea of audience participation on the same basis that seashore real estate used to be sold in Florida. There are others who conceive of the idea so broadly that the current institution of theater parties seems to them the answer. But theater parties aren't the answer; they are merely an improvisation of a number of producers working pragmatically within the present set-up to guarantee their investment against a loss.

If audiences are to play a creative role in the theater then they must clearly stipulate that they want plays that express a social point of view, that are alive and kicking and ready to meet the challenge of our times; and once they've stipulated this, then they must be ready to back such plays to the hilt. But here again, I would offer a warning: this audience support should not be on such a narrow basis that it would serve no practical purpose. It must be sufficiently broad, once the common aim is defined, to admit for experimentation, growth and diversity of approach.

In discussing the theater as a weapon, I've talked only in terms of Broadway. This is because I know Broadway best; and because Broadway, for all its shortcomings, still represents the best in the American theater.

But the world is changing rapidly, and it may be that Broadway will fail to meet the theater's most urgent needs. Despite the effort of some, it may be that economic control will pass into the hands of Hollywood, and most of the legitimate theaters will be torn down in favor of bigger and better picture palaces. Censorship, self-imposed and otherwise, may lay its clammy hand on Broadway, as it has done elsewhere, and certain ideas and emotions will become taboo. In a world where Bilbo flourishes, inflation threatens and the atomic bomb is discussed as if it were no more deadly than a water pistol, nothing is safe from the grasp of the malevolent forces we know are at work.

If this happens, then we'll have to look for other methods of struggle, other forms of theatrical expression. And this too can be done if necessary. Though Broadway is today the eventual destination of the theater worker, much of what I've been talking about first gets its inspiration elsewhere. The roots that nourish the theaters between Fifty-ninth Street and Forty-second first begin in our little theaters throughout the country; in our university theaters where new talent is born and developed; and in outfits like Stage for Action and the Equity Library Theater in New York. If Broadway fails to allow for experimentation and growth, then this talent and energy will go outside the confines of Times Square and create a new type of theater.

This has happened frequently in the past, and given the theater some of its finest plays and greatest acting companies. In America we had the Group Theater and before that the Provincetown Players. In Germany, despite severe postwar inflation, there was a working-class theater under Piscator

**"Ah, Sweet Mystery of LIFE."**

with direct trade union support. In Russia there was the Moscow Art Theater under Stanislavsky and Nimerovich-Danchenko. And in Ireland we had the famous Abbey Theater.

A really great theater means a theater rich in diversified means of expression: it means a frankly experimental theater; a living newspaper theater; a repertory theater; and above all, a labor theater. Granted we must not spread ourselves too thin; but neither must we set up arbitrary rules that will exclude any form of expression. The theater to be really effective—to really promote progress and the democratic ideal—must be ready to accommodate all talents. If Broadway can't supply these things, then Broadway will die, not the theater.

There are already many people who are talking about various theater enterprises. Unfortunately, much of it will remain in the realm of talk. But some of it is already beyond the talking stage. The American Repertory Theater is under way, and plans are being set down for a labor theater. We must be prepared to support and lend encouragement to both these endeavors, and if an experimental theater comes along, we must be ready to give it our attention, advice and criticism. As I see it, we can work both in terms of Broadway and outside of Broadway.

The concept of art as a weapon is not new. Indeed, it is very old. But what is new are the conditions under which it must be applied. And those conditions were never graver. Today the question is: can we forge this weapon fast enough, and make it sufficiently effective to stay the forces of darkness? Literally, it's a question of life or death. The truth is that this time we cannot effort to lose. We simply have got to win.



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# THE VOICE OF ESAU

## An Editorial by A. B. MAGIL

THESE days one often feels with Wordsworth that the world is too much with us. In Wordsworth this expressed the desire to escape the world of nascent industrialism and revolutionary turmoil and immerse himself in the contemplation of nature and the writing of poetry that was for him "emotion recollected in tranquillity." But for the vast millions in his day and ours there is no such escape. In a thousand harsh and painful ways the world is in our homes and in the flesh of our daily lives. It is a world whose inner impulse, as Marx taught us, we must understand if we are to change its substance.

It isn't easy in the torrent of the day's events to tell which way the current is moving. And mistakes may prove costly. We of NEW MASSES were pleased the other day to get a note from an ex-soldier reader which said: "How right you guys were in your appraisal of Truman. I think you can take a few bows on that one. A hell of a lot of progressives (including myself) were very much taken in by his 'good intentions.' But he's shown himself a small, pettish, provincial, narrow-minded, no-visioned man."

Yes, millions must be seeing it now. For a long time a gap existed between foreign and domestic policy. The strength of the labor movement and its allies compelled the Truman administration to move cautiously and deviously on the home front in contrast to the truculence abroad. But because of the very character of its foreign policy objectives the administration could not tolerate labor's vigor and independence. The abandonment of the Roosevelt foreign policy eventually compelled the scuttling of even the shell of its domestic counterpart. The gap has been closed. Nor does Truman's veto of the Case bill open it again, for the arguments he used against the bill were themselves anti-labor. But the paradox is that most people, including the majority of the labor movement, still see all this one-sidedly, merely in terms of what is happening at home. The job is to get them to see that the strike-breaking government is also a peace-breaker, and that through Byrnes' lips no less than through Truman's there speaks the Esau voice of big capital.

OUT of the Pandora's box opened by the President have sprung not only the Truman and Case anti-labor bills, but an OPA extension measure which promises to be OPA in name and galloping inflation in fact. Of course, the President didn't intend that one to get out. At least not all of it. The administration has favored a more gently billowing rise in prices such as the recent increases in the cost of bread, milk and butter. But even this has begun to boomerang. The general executive board of one of the largest locals of the United Automobile Workers-CIO, Local 7, has raised the demand for new wage increases because those recently won have already been whittled away. The Truman wage-price policy was summed up as far back as February 1 by Joseph and Stewart Alsop in their syndicated column: ". . . price increases are now being granted, in most cases, to compensate for wage increases, business is to be permitted to make the same or greater profits as before, even if this in part nullifies the value of labor's wage increases by contracting the buying power of wages." The overall strategy behind this policy was described by the Alsop brothers in these words: "Today the Truman line is to keep labor in the Democratic column, if possible, but to grant any concessions the businessmen really insist upon." The first part of this strategy seems to have run into some unexpected difficulties.

IN ALL the discussion about the prospects of a new anti-monopoly party in 1948 not enough attention has been paid to the results of a recent Gallup poll.

The question asked by the Gallup people was: "If a new national political party is organized by labor—in addition to the present Republican and Democratic Parties—do you think you would join it?" This question was narrowly and confusingly phrased. In the first place, labor would not be the sole organizer of such a party though the labor movement would constitute its central core. Secondly, it is not a question of how many individuals would join such a party, but of how many would support it and vote for its candidates. But even on the limited basis of the Gallup formulation, ten percent said yes, seventy-four percent said no, and sixteen percent had no opinion. Ten percent of the electorate in 1944 would have been a little under 5,000,000 votes, or slightly more than the elder La Follette received in 1924 (though the total vote that year was about one-half as large). This is a very substantial number when one considers that the poll was taken before Truman went berserk against labor and that no real campaign has yet been undertaken to develop sentiment for a new party. Among labor union members twenty-four percent said they would join a new party, fifty-six percent said no, while twenty percent had no opinion.

IN AN editorial on Foreign Minister Bevin's latest but one anti-Soviet blast the N. Y. *Herald Tribune* wrote (June 6): "The Russian notion that only the Soviets represent the workers and that the Soviet system must be spread through the world is, indeed, as Mr. Bevin says, one of Russia's 'greatest handicaps' . . ." This is demagogy compounded. In what country is Russia spreading the Soviet system? In fact, it would be more accurate to say that capitalism is "spreading" the Soviet system, for socialism grows out of the conditions and insoluble conflicts of capitalist society as inevitably as capitalism grew out of those in feudal society. Certainly Soviet achievements have a great attractive power for other peoples in the same sense as did the achievements of the American and French revolutions in the eighteenth century. But there were Communist movements in various countries — including the United States—long before the Soviet system was established in Russia, and there would be such movements today even if the czar still ruled in the Kremlin.

As for which governments are



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spreading what, the beam seems to be in someone else's eye. In the same issue of the *Herald Tribune* appeared a news story headlined: BRITISH ACCUSED OF FOSTERING A FASCIST GREECE.

This particular charge against Britain, and partly against the United States, was made by William L. Shirer, who is a special writer for the *Herald Tribune!*

SWEET are the uses of semantics. We read in a column by the Alsop brothers (June 5) that Secretary of Agriculture Anderson "is now resisting OPA efforts to divert butterfat from ice cream and candy manufacturers, and desires to raise the price of butter still further." Perhaps we get sore and then pass on to other news. But wait a minute: isn't Anderson actually trying to *rob* the people of additional millions of dollars? And aren't the combined robberies and peculations of such as Al Capone, Dutch Schultz *et al.* chicken-feed compared to Anderson's operations? Socialism is a system under which the crimes of a Capone and an Anderson (who, after all, is just a leg-man for the big grain, cattle and dairy interests) would be appraised at their proper worth.

# FELLOW-TRAVELERS OF THE KLAN

***While fiery crosses light the skies, the Un-American Committee says "the threats and intimidation of the KKK are an old American custom."***

## By VIRGINIA GARDNER

*Washington*

THE Wood-Rankin Un-American Activities committee's "annual" report, five months overdue, claims there are 150 "Communist Front" organizations in New York City alone, but fails to identify the chief forum and front organization for fascists and Ku Klux Klan fellow-travelers. That is the Un-American committee itself.

The report also fails to mention its third public hearing, when Fuehrer Gerald L. K. Smith testified. But after Smith used the committee to point out all the organizations and individuals he wanted investigated—and after the committee assigned an investigator to follow up his tips, according to Rep. Gerald Landis (R., Ind.)—what is more natural than that his followers should use the committee for their "complaints"?

Thus we see the Rev. Harvey Springer of Englewood, Colo., associate of Smith and Gerald Winrod and one of the defendants in the sedition trial, calling on three committee members with his complaints. And with him, this reporter has learned, were two evangelists from Knoxville, Tenn., who have fronted for the Klan.

Of course the committee makes it clear that being an associate of a man indicted for sedition is no handicap, in the committee's estimate. The report, written in Counsel Ernie Adamson's incomparable style, becomes acidulous concerning an un-named government agency which "did find time to prosecute some thirty or forty native Americans who were charged with sedition, and a trial covering eight months and costing hundreds of thousands of dollars was conducted to convict these persons." And as its contribution to justice in the U.S., the report continues: "This department now admits that they have no concrete evidence against these so-called native fascists."

At the outset the report tells us, "The committee has formulated the policy of investigating complaints received from American citizens who have the interest of the United States foremost in their hearts and minds."

WHO are these citizens who pass the tests applied by our Congressional arbiter of what is loyal and patriotic in this democracy—beg pardon, this republic of ours? Let us look at the trio who were photographed with three members of the committee for Springer's *Western Voice*, weekly hate sheet: Springer, the Rev. T. Wesley Hill and the Rev. J. Harold Smith.

In one of a series of stories on the American Nationalists in the Scripps-Howard papers, Eugene Segal (Washington *Daily News*, July 20, 1945) wrote of Springer, "And in Detroit, leaders of the United Sons of America, the revived Ku Klux Klan, say they expect both Goff [Kenneth Goff of Denver] and Rev. Springer to come in with them."

With Springer in Washington and in the Un-American committee rooms were the Rev. T. Wesley Hill and the Rev. J. Harold Smith, of Knoxville. (Gerald L. K. Smith was a visitor in Washington at the same time.) The Rev. Mr. Smith has denied membership in the Klan, but he and the Rev. Mr. Hill were the only two members of the Baptist Ministers' Association who talked and voted against a resolution denouncing the Klan passed at a recent meeting of the association. The Rev. Mr. Smith spoke favorably of the Klan's aims.

The first open meeting of the Klan in recent years in Knoxville was held on Saturday night, May 20, in the Bible Baptist Tabernacle. The Rev. Mr. Hill is the pastor of the Tabernacle, which was the scene of a recent protest meeting directed against the refusal of some broadcasting stations to sell time to evangelists. The Rev. Mr. Hill was one of the protest leaders. It is this complaint that they took to the Rankin-Wood committee.

The Rev. Mr. Hill has said that he had no connection with the Klan, and that he simply rented his church to the Klan for its open meeting. One of a committee of three in charge, however, was Vernon Elusk, secretary-treasurer of his Tabernacle.

The resurgence of the Klan has been marked by the burning of crosses in eastern Tennessee, where the American Fellowship Club has been organized. It is called a part of the Klan by its founder, the Rev. A. A. Haggard, Maryville evangelist, who claims 10,000 members in Blount, Knox and Hamblen counties. At the meeting in the Rev. Mr. Hill's Tabernacle, some 250 attended. Haggard, who with a minister from Middletown, the Rev. Clarence E. Garrett, spoke, said that the American Fellowship Club was to the Klan what the Baptist Young People's Union is to the Baptist Church.



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One or two busloads of Klansmen from Tennessee attended one of the recent ceremonies on Stone Mountain in Georgia, where crosses have been burned and photographed, and these included Haggard and some twenty-five other Tennesseeans, revealing in part the national character of the Klan movement.

As a sequel to the appearance of Springer and the Tennessee evangelists here, Springer's hate-sheet carried a story under the modest headline: "HARVEY H. SPRINGER IN WASHINGTON; ROCKS NATION FROM COAST TO COAST." By appearing before the Un-American committee members, Springer did obtain national publicity for his attack on various radio stations, the Federal Council of Churches in Christ, the Federal Communications Commission and others. Removal of Smith's broadcasts from station WNOX, and other evangelists elsewhere, he said, is part of a "campaign unleashed by Communists, left-wingers, the PAC and Scripps-Howard newspapers." Some of the radio stations owned by Scripps-Howard have adopted a policy of "donating time" for religious broadcasts.

IN HIS book, *It's A Secret*, Henry Hoke describes the Rev. Arthur W. Terminiello of Anniston, Ala., as "the Coughlinite who is really hitting the jackpot."

Hoke said: "It is incredible that a person like Terminiello could gain a hearing in the halls of Congress, but he did." But his hearing consisted only in Sen. William Langer's introduction of his petition to investigate the Pearl Harbor disaster into the *Congressional Record*—a petition which was used, however, by Sen. David I. Walsh a month later as a basis for demanding that the Pearl Harbor "guilt" be publicized. Terminiello had hinted strongly that Roosevelt was responsible.

But these other disciples of Gerald L. K. Smith had a real hearing in the halls of Congress. And it was not a discredited pro-fascist like Sen. Langer but two run-of-the-mill reactionary Republicans, Reps. William S. Hill of Colorado and John Jennings Jr. of Tennessee, who sponsored their appearance, ushering them in to meet members of the Wood-Rankin committee.

Time and again Smith in his testimony told the committee how the "Jewish Gestapo" organizations, as he calls such groups as the Friends of Democracy and the Anti-Defamation League, had attacked his Christian Nationalist friends. He offered to bring before them his Baltimore friend, the Rev. Walter Haushalter of American Action, Inc., who resigned his pulpit rather than quit AA after it was exposed in NEW MASSES.

When the Wood-Rankin committee recently asked, and got, $75,000 from the House, Reps. Vito Marcantonio, John Coffee, George Sadowski and Arthur Klein of New York all demanded to know whether any of it would be spent investigating the Ku Klux Klan.

Not then, but after the appropriation was passed, did Chairman John S. Wood of Georgia declare that "the threats and intimidation of the Ku Klux Klan are an old American custom, just like illegal whiskey making." The committee would not investigate the Klan, he said. And Rep. John Rankin was reported to have told the committee the Klan was "thoroughly American."

Previously Rep. Klein had taken the floor to condemn the committee's use of "such unsavory sources as Harvey Springer and Gerald L. K. Smith." He had been reliably informed, he said, that Springer had been invited to Washington by the committee "to discuss his findings on communism in America." At least, he said, "that is the public boast he made in Knoxville, Tenn., last week, in which he told of spending ten hours with the committee's investigators who were returning from a trip to Hollywood."

Rep. John Murdock (D., Ariz.), one of the liberals on the committee, told me about the appearance of Springer and the Tennesseans. "They were brought into the committee room by the Congressmen [Hill and Jennings]," said Rep. Murdock, "and introduced to Chairman Wood, Rep. Rankin and myself. We posed for a picture with them, with a big box of letters they dumped on the table. Mr. Rankin and I both were leaving for committee meetings. Rev. Smith made a statement, without a reporter present, and they introduced a written statement, and we left them to Mr. Wood to question."

Rep. Jennings said he didn't know anything about the Klan. Rep. Hill said, "Oh—fascist? Well, lots of names are used. The Democrats call us Republicans names, too."

I CALLED Chairman Wood. He was just back from Georgia, where the Klan had been burning crosses on

## This Week's Rankest

"No, no, please, mom! I'll be good!"



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Stone Mountain, and he was upset. But it was not the fiery crosses which had upset his usual serenity: it was the appearance of a rival for his seat, an attorney from Gainesville, Howard T. Oliver. Now the CIO has some organization in his district. The marble works are organized. "I assume he thinks he's got 'em," he said when I asked if Oliver had labor support. I asked him about seeing the Tennesseeans and Springer, "Gerald L. K. Smith's pal."

"How do you know he is?" Rep. Wood asked.

"For one thing, by Smith's own words before your committee," I said. If the committee ever got a copy of Smith's reports to the Clerk of the House it could have seen that he made disbursements under the subhead of printed matter to Kenneth Goff of Denver, who works closely with Springer in the Christian Youth for America. "By the way, did your committee ever get those reports of Smith's?" I asked him.

"No, we didn't," he said. I pointed out that his committee not only had asked Smith nothing about Springer, but had not followed up Smith's mention of the Rev. Wesley A. Swift. (Smith introduced an article entitled "Moscow versus Gerald L. K. Smith," by Rev. Jonathan E. Perkins and Rev. Swift—"a summary of some of our experiences," he told the committee, in complaining about how the Christian Nationalists were attacked.)

The Rev. Swift, I told Rep. Wood, is called "Pistol-Packin' Pastor" by Attorney-General Robert Kenny of California because of the number of guns he has bought in the last year, and has been identified by Kenny as a Klan leader and speaker at a Gerald L. K. Smith meeting. (It was Swift who stated, at Big Bear Valley, where fiery crosses have been burned, where Negroes have been run out of town and Jews terrorized, "The Klan is here to stay in Bear Valley. We intend to form restrictive covenants to hold the line to pure Americanism." Swift declared that Gerald L. K. Smith was the "big shot" in the revival of the Klan.)

But to all this Chairman Wood replied: "So far as I know, these men are ministers of the Christian Church. It's a purely American institution."

"Would you say that Father Coughlin is purely American?" he was asked.

"No, but he preaches the doctrine of the overthrow of this government." Asked why the committee didn't do something about him, he said, "Don't think we haven't." But, he said, "these others are Christian."

"Then you don't think Gerald L. K. Smith is a fascist?" I asked.

"I thought we'd crushed all them in the war," he said jovially. "He may be in favor of fascism," he continued, growing serious, "but he doesn't advocate the overthrow of this government by force and violence. I've been accused of being a fascist myself. Yes, I, personally, have been accused of being a fascist by no less than Walter Winchell. And that's why I've got opposition today," he said morosely.

"Well, Congressman," I said, "that seems to be one thing the American people don't like, fascism."

At one point in our conversation I asked Chairman Wood, since they were not investigating the Klan, if he could tell me what the progress was in their search for Jellico Jeannie, the "sultry beauty." Rep. Wood made it clear that he is "not interested" in such a character. In fact, he knew nothing about her, or about a New York *Journal-American* story of April 22 by the Hearst "expert" on committee affairs, David Sentner, which was headed: "US AGENTS SEEK SULTRY BEAUTY AS SOVIET ATOM SPY."

According to Mr. Sentner, Jellico Jeannie was a "sparkling creature," was "rhythmically slender with slanted black eyes to match silky black hair," had a "cream-colored complexion" and a "slight accent" which might have been Mexican. Moreover, she used to thumb rides with truck drivers along the delivery route to the atomic bomb reservation in Oak Ridge. Mr. Sentner pictured Ernie Adamson as hot on her trail.

(But later, when I asked Ernie how the sultry beauty was getting along, he feigned indifference. Someone had told him about the story but he hadn't read it. "I spend most of my time reading the *Daily Worker*," he explained. But he wouldn't go so far as to deny he had given Sentner the material. "I don't care to make any statement about it," he said. Likewise, he would not deny that it was at Harvey Springer's request that he sent an investigator to Denver. "He may have been one of many who made such a request," he said primly.)

I asked Rep. Wood if the committee ever had defined un-Americanism. Yes, he said, un-Americanism meant advocating the overthrow of the government by violence. Then, this, from the chairman:

"Do *you* think the Klan is un-American?"

"Don't you think it is?"

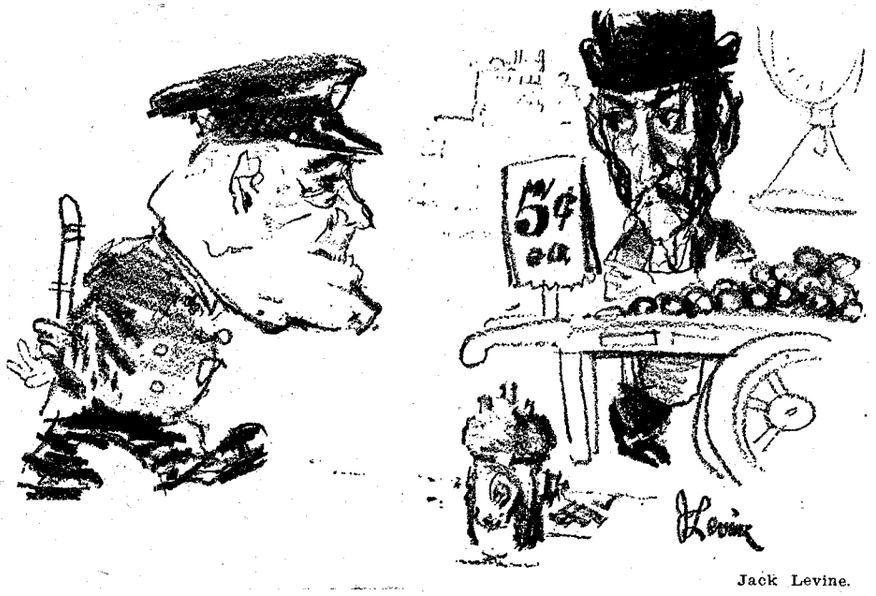
"I'm asking you what you think," he said.

"Of course I think the Klan is un-American," I said. Then, "So you aren't going to send any investigators to Georgia?"

"I don't run the investigators," he said, "I just try to be a Congressman."

"Does that mean you don't run the committee either, but let Rankin do it?" I asked.

"I don't know that that's any particular concern of yours. You'd like to intimate it." And the receiver clicked abruptly—at his end.




Jack Levine.



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# review and comment

## OCTOBER'S IRON PLOW

***Some of Russia's uprooted intelligentsia found a new life under a changed sky. Tolstoy's epic.***

**By PETER AYRE**

ROAD TO CALVARY, *by Alexei Tolstoy. Knopf. $4.50.*

ROMANTIC in conception, epic in scope, this massive Stalin Prize trilogy, which thrilled and fascinated tens of millions of Soviet readers, chronicles the fate of the bourgeois personality during the first proletarian revolution. *Road to Calvary* is a superbly readable novel. In a succession of swift, dramatic scenes, built up effortlessly and with uncanny perfection of visual and psychological detail, Alexei Tolstoy creates characters of such hallucinatory realism, so contagiously sympathetic and alive, that long after the reader puts down the book he will remember them like intimate friends or old lovers. The narrative has the movement of a swirling river settling into a calm, wide lake in which the image of our lives is reflected; and then it floods on into the oceanic panorama of what may be our own future. For, in a sense, the Russian men and women who walk this Road to Calvary anticipated our own experience. Forty years ago they knew the malady of anxiety and the poisonous sweetness of a spiritual wound; they knew the triumphs and exhaustion of individualism; and the iron plow of history passed over them and left the deepest roots of their being upturned and writhing in the bleak morning of a new era.

It isn't easy to label this vast piece of fiction. Picaresque yet subtle, intimate yet panoramic, *Road to Calvary*, with its flowerlike and unhappy heroines, its soft-hearted desperate heroes, combines in some transfiguring Soviet literary chemistry the delicate nostalgia of a *Forsythe Saga* with all the palpitating romanticism of a *Gone With the Wind*. In style and purpose, of course, it is a whole lightyear beyond Miss Mitchell's classic experiment in US *kitsch*. It is superior to Galsworthy's achievement by the same measure that Russian revolutionary experience has transcended in human value the British experience of imperial decline. Alexei Tolstoy records the dream and doom of the bourgeois past, yet also the promise and the fulfilment; in form his fiction is popular and melodramatic, but he is concerned with the conscience and character of man.

*Road to Calvary* teems with exciting adventures, hair-raising intrigues, historic battles and escapades, spine-chilling exploits, captures and escapes, anguished partings of lovers and sudden meetings of foes; yet the sustained note of poetic realism (conveyed to us by Edith Bone's sensitive translation) lends to Alexei Tolstoy's most improbable coincidences some perfume of inevitability, as if all these heart-rending farewells and greetings, which make up the story's suspense, were in fact the truest symbols of the everlasting human adventure. After all, what could be more like a romantic epic than the true story of the Russian people in their revolution? In those fiery years existence itself took on aspects of the improbable, the inconceivable, as circumstances which had shaped men for centuries were swept away by the spontaneous actions of surging millions shaping circumstances unimaginably new. In the center of this elemental human whirlpool in which history was being refashioned the traditional "individual" lived; but how? The answer to that question is the theme of *Road to Calvary*.

Surely this is a theme peculiarly relevant to ourselves. The opening part of the trilogy evokes an atmosphere at once exotic and familiar. The scene is St. Petersburg just before World War I. Then St. Petersburg was one of the great world-hives of bourgeois culture. In this hectic, enchanting city of palaces and hovels, with its stock exchange, its banks, its brothels, theaters and cabarets, the Russian intellectuals (who coined the very word *intelligentsia* to define themselves) prophetically explored the whole labyrinth of our contemporary alienation. Here morbidity was considered natural, neurosis a sign of sutblety. The finest minds became incandescent with tragic insight and self-torment and burnt out suddenly like brief, spectacular rockets. Marvellous personalities like the poet Alexander Blok (who appears in this novel under the name of Bessonov) felt themselves trapped in terrible cul-de-sacs of moral decay. Cults of nihilism, anarchism, futurism, symbolism, mushroomed out of the political and cultural corruption they assailed. This growth of anxiety had already been noted with medical accuracy by Chekov. On the eve of the climactic war, the process was intensified; decadence openly declared itself and the aroma of death was almost palpable. Strikes in the factories, peasant riots in the country, restlessness among the women, despair and mysticism among the artists and, among the radical intellectuals, contempt for art ("The Venus of Milo? So what? Can we eat her?"): an atmosphere, in short, of intolerable, almost apocalyptic expectancy.

The two central characters of *Road to Calvary* are the Bulavin sisters, Katia and Dasha. Katia, married to a weak-willed liberal lawyer, was a beautiful neurotic woman who collected futurist paintings and played hostess to the St. Petersburg *intelligentsia*; she became involved in a sordid, hopeless adultery which only increased her feeling of being useless and unloved. Her young sister, Dasha, was virginal, adorable, with a generous Russian heart, ash-blonde hair and stern grey eyes; she, too, was touched with the malaise of the time. Dasha could see no future for herself, sex troubled her imagination, she read the perturbing verses of Bessonov (her sister's lover) and felt drawn to their author with irresistible longings to cast herself away, to "abandon" herself. Under the flurry of their fashionable daily lives—the new books, the Paris gowns, the art-shows, the theaters, the parties—both sisters dimly



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knew that their lives were stagnant, meaningless. "My heart is all dried and withered inside me," confessed Katia to her sister; and Dasha drew the only wisdom she could from her own youth, the hope: "I believe that, if we have courage, we shall live to see a time when we can love without heartache."

THE impact of revolution on these women and on their community was shattering beyond conception. Imperialist war unloosed hurricanes of hate and destruction; the arabesque of spiritual conflict became incarnate in catastrophe upon catastrophe; bourgeois society (the only universe of their existence) disintegrated and collapsed. Katia, Dasha and all the charming and talented people they knew were helplessly caught up and scattered afar by revolution and counter-revolution, like seeds in a tempest. And, like stubborn seeds, some of these rich, complex personalities from the pre-revolutionary universe did not perish, but sank into the soil and took root and, after a time, began to put forth strange, fragile tendrils of new life under a changed sky.

Despite the sloth, the self-pity and the despair, the Russian *intelligentsia* had always been more than a merely sociological phenomenon. In the October storms the layers of the socially conditioned evils and frustrations were cut away; the human heart remained. The best of the bourgeois class had always sought, and now at last some of them were to find, an understanding of man's fate, which means not only the irreducible human loneliness, but also the invincible human energy which creates immortal communion. The primitive Christian theologians called this "the communion of saints"; it inspired the Russian people as the community of man, or communism. That is the story of *Road to Calvary*, the "way through hell," which leads through crucifixion to resurrection, through suffering to redemption.

Alexei Tolstoy worked over twenty years to complete this enormous novel. Much of his own life is in it. Son of a land-owning Samara family, distantly related to the great Leo Tolstoy and to Ivan Turgenev, he had profound ties with the old Russian life and literature. Before the Revolution, he was a member of the Petersburg *intelligentsia* which he so vividly describes; he wrote brilliant futurist stories, studied Flaubert and developed a literary style of exquisite sensibility and psychological acuity. There was a time when, like his own character Bessonov, he abandoned himself altogether to the sick lyricism of anxiety; existence terrified and bored him. "All these corpses, corpses, corpses." "I'm bored, brother. . . . The bourgeois world is vile, and it bores me stiff. . . . And if we win, the Communist world will be just as boring and grey, virtuous and boring." And there was a time when, like another of his characters, Roschin, the Czarist officer who is one of the heroes of *Road to Calvary*, he saw in the revolutionary turmoil nothing but madness and terrorism. "All our dreams are smashed to smithereens." Many men of imagination temporarily drew back appalled when they peered over the brink of that original whirlpool of Russian revolt in which it seemed art, science and the personality of man would be engulfed forever. "We're too squeamish; we can't understand a revolution without nice little books. In the nice little books the Revolution is described very attractively. But this our people simply deserts from the front, drowns officers, lynches the Commander-in-Chief, burns manors, hunts merchants' wives on the railroads, and digs their diamond earrings from all sorts of places under their petticoats. No, we say, we don't want to play with this nasty people, there's nothing written in our books about such people. . . ." In 1918, Alexei Tolstoy left his country to live in Paris and Berlin. Four years later he made a new choice: he returned to Russia and became a Soviet writer.

"A true idea is like a woman—it embraces you and sears you so that you would run after it barefoot over live coals." Alexei Tolstoy didn't find his "true word" without heart-searching. At first, he wrote fantastic novels. He wrote about a proletarian revolution on Mars to show his sympathy for the one which was taking place under his nose, but about which he was mistakenly persuaded he could not write because he himself was not of proletarian origin. It took several years until he and other Soviet writers came to understand that revolution (like art) exists simultaneously on many different levels of experience and consciousness. The real, living texture of the Russian revolutionary event in all its multitudinous richness and variety included, as Lenin said, the activity and fantasy of all classes, of all Russian individuals. Alexei Tolstoy's memory of the past, his sophisticated taste and skill, his



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culture and perception were not irrelevant; on the contrary, they were indispensable.

"Can you see now how purposeful all our efforts, all the blood we shed, all our unsung and uncomplaining torments have become? We shall rebuild the world, a better world. . . . And all this is happening here, in my country, and this is Russia!"

These are among the concluding words of *Road to Calvary*, and they express the culminating mood of an entire Russian epoch: Alexei Tolstoy wrote them on the morning of June 22, 1941.

## Ham Actor

BERNARD CLARE, *by James T. Farrell. Vanguard. $2.75.*

ADOLESCENCE is a trying time for everybody. It is particularly disturbing to the young writer—and his friends. Writhing with self-examination, with self-reproach, he turns for release to dreams in which he sees himself in exalted roles, a genius among imbeciles, Samson waiting for the moment when he can pull the temple down. As he matures, he looks back with loving irony on this scarecrow frightened of itself. He was this prince in rags, torturing himself and irritating the boss, the landlord and the bartender.

It's a different matter when the writer, long past his youth, grabs you by the lapels: "Here I am, just as I was twenty years ago. The same rebel, the same Sir Launcelot, the same drunk. A damn interesting character, let me tell you about myself." And does, for 367 pages.

*Bernard Clare* is a novel about an adolescent of twenty-one by an adolescent of forty-two. Only now the self-reproach has become self-pity, vast, shapeless, colorless, like a faded dressing-gown on a ham actor. The awkward thoughts are now pigeon-toed platitudes; even the dialogue of love, juvenile yet without charm, is loaded with boring "profundities," gems of Bughouse Square.

The noble, even if inflated, hopes of the young Farrell—to be a great writer, the American Balzac, heir to Dreiser—have taken on an air of repellent vanity in this humorless version of his encounters with unfeeling humanity. It is only occasionally, when he finds himself drawn to figures of protest and suffering like Sacco and Vanzetti, that he seeks identity with others. For the rest he has a lack of comprehension amounting to hostility. He has no tolerance for interests he does not share; he cannot understand a character dissimilar from his own, a temperament either more secure or more volatile than his. The qualities of another human being offer him no clue to his own, and, conversely, his approach to others is limited by his ability to see them only in terms of his own traits and conflicts. A glass wall separates them from him. He sees but cannot reach them.

I am inclined to feel that among Farrell's many flaws the emotional one stands out, though it has the most miserable intellectual effects. He has never got beyond the withering struggle with his family, with the parochial system and with the Puritan elements of Irish-American life. This struggle has exhausted his power of observation, his thoughts and his resources of feeling. Unlike Edward McSorley, author of *Our Own Kind*, he can hardly remember other than its negative aspects, the strangling of his childhood and youth by poverty, prudery and bigotry. Caught in this battle, never escaping


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from it, he must always see the visage of his old enemies in place of the new faces before him. Every sexual encounter of his biographical character is the first one repeated, with delight giving way to shame and repulsion. No matter in what city he gets drunk, he will always be picking a fight with somebody he hated in Chicago. His demand to be recognized as a genius is actually an insistence that he be compensated for the dryness and tawdriness of his ever-living and gnawing past.

But Farrell is far from being a genius. He has become one of America's worst writers. Not that he is so much poorer than before, but he shows himself more and more inadequate to the task he set himself—to describe the unfolding and growth of a writer's personality in great American cities. Perhaps that is the fault of the personality to be unfolded. Bernard Clare is a retarded weed planted in parched ground, a dull, humorless, pouting and belligerent philosophizer who sees the tragedy of the world mainly as his own frustration magnified.

If I have not mentioned Farrell's high- and low-class Red-baiting (depending on whether he writes for the *New Republic* or the Trotzkyite *New International*, respectively), or his hysterical hatred for the Soviet Union, it is not because they are irrelevant. Farrell's anti-Sovietism is in a department of his mind opening on the one in which his novels are manufactured, a section in which he probably sees himself as Edmund Burke rather than Balzac. In this review I preferred to deal with the latter pretension. But Farrell's politics are no accident. They stem from a rejection of discipline in thought or action, a wild refusal to be responsible to any organization or for any consistent thinking which he fears might harness his unique talent. On the other hand, his Trotzkyism has more than reinforced his early alienation from others. It has developed his antagonism into a system; his politics, which at first were the expression of his intellectual decay, are now themselves efficient causes of his further personal and literary degeneration. In Trotzkyism he has found both a rationale for his distorted way of experiencing human contacts and an instrument for increasing that distortion. Its price is a book like *Bernard Clare*.

Farrell is very much like the *lumpen* characters he writes about. Behind his lashing out at the abuses of the world is a sodden misanthropy, a rejection of the possibility of happiness and the validity of men's effort. This is not the tragic sense but its counterfeit, ordinary pessimism. Whatever revolutionary feelings Farrell may have had have been curdled by his sour view of human relationships. His book is a new bottle filled with old, spoiled milk.

CHARLES HUMBOLDT.

## Why Socialism?

SOCIALISM—What's In It for You, *by A. B. Magil. New Century Publishers.* 10¢.

HERE in sixty-four pages is the pamphlet thousands have been seeking, a compact little work that explains socialism in simple, modern language. Written for the thoughtful man or woman, this booklet will illuminate to the careful reader the fundamental aims of communism in our land.

Magil begins with a striking opening, a headline from a current newspaper: 100 VETERANS ASK TO SLEEP IN PARK. From that point he develops his thesis with logic, documentation and grace—that is to say, with the persuasive effect of the man who respects the opinion of his fellow-man and *wants* to answer his questions.

Magil asks a series of questions: Why should veterans worry about housing today? Why should the nation be worrying about goods in this land of plenty? Why should we be worrying about the cycle of boom and bust? Why should we be worrying about a new war within a year after the greatest war in history?

Step by step the author answers his own questions, piling fact upon fact, argument upon argument, to demonstrate with invincible logic that it is capitalism, the system of production of commodities for profit, that is the root cause of poverty, crises and devastating wars.

Is there another way? Magil asks. It is socialism, he answers. "Perhaps you've grown up prejudiced against that word," Magil suggests. "In school, in the newspapers, over the radio you've been told that socialism is alien to America. Actually the word socialism is of strictly Anglo-Saxon origin."

With this he traces socialism from its Utopian beginnings in the communist colonies of Robert Owen in England and the United States, through its reconstruction by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels on a scientific basis, to its development by Lenin and Stalin in



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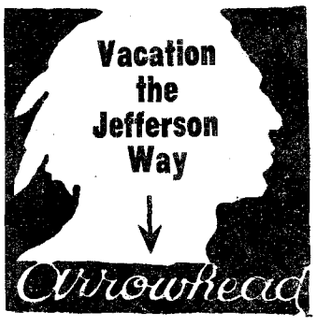


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the Soviet Union, the first socialist state in history.

Describing briefly the way socialism works in the Soviet Union, Magil then turns his attention to socialism in the United States. He studiously avoids drawing any detailed blueprint of American socialism, perhaps bearing in mind Marx's famous injunction about not writing the kitchen recipes of the future. Pointing out that there will be much for Americans to learn from the titans of modern socialism in the Soviet Union, Magil emphasizes that "it would be a mistake to think that our socialist society will simply be a carbon copy of the one in Russia. There will be many differences as a result of differences in national conditions, customs and traditions."

The general outline of American socialism is drawn with swift, bold strokes so that worker, farmer, small businessman may see how he can benefit from a new society with a planned economy run by and for the producers. This section of Magil's pamphlet is particularly valuable, for it is here that he analyzes some of the basic fallacies of Henry Wallace's economics, as outlined in the latter's *60,000,000 Jobs*.

Magil ducks none of the usual questions about socialism. Will it work? Is it opposed to religion? What about freedom under socialism? What kind of incentive can exist under socialism if you eliminate the profit motive? All the old anti-Marxist canards are carefully examined by the author and answered.

Magil has performed a distinct service with this modest pamphlet, a service beyond the limits of the work itself. For he has not only written something to meet a long-felt need, a primer on socialism in America, but he has employed a method that all too many propagandists ignore. That is, he has tackled the questions hurled by the most backward and most prejudiced and has sought to answer them in simple language. Assuming nothing, Magil always defines a term when he first uses it. He obviously wrote this pamphlet for the unconvinced, not for the schooled Marxist.

Magil's mission was difficult but he has carried it through with credit to himself and the movement he serves so well. More simple, effective and unpretentious pamphlets like this are needed to convince Americans that communism is common sense for the common man. S. W. GERSON.

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# sights and sounds

## AMERICAN AND SOVIET THEATERS

***One is a hotel, says Konstantin Simonov, the other a home. The need for repertory.***

**By ISIDOR SCHNEIDER**

SHORTLY before Konstantin Simonov's return to the Soviet Union, Stage for Action held a forum at which the Soviet playwright answered questions on the theater put to him by a panel of experts, and by people in the audience. The panel included James Gow, co-author of *Deep Are the Roots*, who acted as chairman, Harold Clurman, the director, Sono Osata, the actress-dancer, Norris Houghton, the director of Theater Incorporated and author of *Moscow Rehearsals*, Frederick Fox, the scene designer, and Alex Leith, Executive Director of Stage for Action. An indispensable part of the program was the alert and sensitive interpreting by Bernard Koten.

Simonov made no attempt to be an ambassador. He made the occasion doubly valuable by his candor. He was patient through some foolish questions from the floor, including the inevitable one about all Soviet productions being propaganda—despite the fact that some sixty percent of the Soviet productions are classics—and another that sought public condolences from Simonov over the questioner's job problem. These aside, the questions were well considered; and the answers to them helped to build a rather rounded conception of the Soviet theater and to make clear its main differences from the American theater.

There were questions about the relations between the Soviet theater and the state, the organizations of the playing companies, the training of young actors, the interrelations of actors, director, scene designer and playwright; and the trade union organizations of the Soviet theater workers.

Simonov's message may be summed up in two vigorous and picturesque similes of his own. One was contained in an article written by him for an American newspaper; the other was developed in his answers to questions on the relation of one factor in a theater—the playwright, the designer, the actor, the director—to each other and to the whole.

In the simile elaborated in Simonov's article, which gave his impressions of the American theater, he compared it to a hotel. The American theater, said Simonov, has the transience and the uncertainty of a hotel. Luxurious as may be the furnishings, it lacks the warmth, the ease, the security and the permanence of a home, such as the Soviet theater enjoys through its established repertory companies. He reminded his audience that this was not a Soviet phenomenon, though Soviet conditions had proved favorable to its development; that the most notable of all the Soviet companies, the Moscow Art Theater, had been established in pre-Soviet times and was then only one of several active Russian companies.

Through the development of repertory companies the American theater, too, could turn itself from a hotel into a home. And, with that, some of the problems of the American stage could be solved. One that would certainly be solved would be the inadequacy of rehearsals which depend, now, not on the actual state of production but on the availability of a playhouse and the exigencies of the season. A permanent company, with its own auditorium, scenic and properties staff, and an established repertory, could afford to rehearse until it was really ready.

S. Field.

The second simile was that of the fingers and the clenched fist. The playwright, the director, the actor, the designer and any other of the major figures in a production are like the fingers of the hand. Unless they close together in complete unity they cannot deliver the full power, the full impact of the fist. Thus Simonov made clear the importance of the collective responsibility and functioning of the theater company and emphasized its opposite character in the American theater. There the backer or director may force changes in a script (in the Soviet theater the playwright has the final say on script changes), or an actor may overplay in an attempt to steal the show, or a scene designer may overpower the acting with his sets. In an established company the sense of security and group work stimulates one to exert all his effort *with* rather than *against* any other factor in a production.

FOR most Americans interested in the stage the bogey behind the repertory company has been the government subsidy. Along with his reminder that acting companies were not a Soviet innovation but had already existed in capitalist Russia, Simonov made it clear that the acting companies justify themselves even from the box office viewpoint. Simonov smiled at the mistaken assumption that the Soviet repertory companies regularly and heedlessly go into the red while government blindly meets all deficits, from an inexhaustible budget.

With the exception of the big opera and ballet theaters, whose additional musical corps and other extra staff raise production costs above ordinary income, Soviet theaters rarely show a loss. Most operate at steady profits that would make American producers envious. A loss is held to be a reflection on the quality of the theater; its management must acount for an unprofitable season primarily in artistic terms.

Simonov's comments on the Soviet theater are borne out by the experiences of Old Vic, the English repertory company, which operates theaters in three English cities. Old Vic is protected by a governmental guarantee which it



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has never had to apply for. Its own profits have enabled it to expand not only to cities outside of London but to such enterprises as its own school (another point in which it resembles the major Soviet companies), an experimental theater and a children's theater.

The irony in the situation is that, when accurately analyzed, it is the American theater that is dependent on subsidies. With its dismal record of three or more failures to one hit, with its parade of "angels" and its increasing subservience to Hollywood, it is the American theater that is dependent on patronage. It has yet to achieve a mature independence; and it is surely more likely to do so through the establishment of permanent repertory companies than through continuing its precarious speculative existence on Broadway.

Unfortunately there was neither the time nor the specific occasion for Simonov to deal with two aspects of the Soviet theater that distinguished it from any other in the world. One is the system of children's theaters which helps to lay a cultural bridge for the transition from childhood to maturity, and is of incalculable value in developing a discriminating theater audience. The other is the rapidly expanding system of national theaters which has implanted a theater art, based on national cultural roots, in every Soviet Republic.

As a consequence some of the small Soviet nations like Armenia and Uzbekistan have national theaters that big America could be proud of. It further makes possible an animated and mutually enriching interchange between all the Soviet nations. The theater experience that stands out as the most overwhelming in my memory, aside from my first attendance at a theater, were the national theater festivals in Moscow where I witnessed Uzbek, Azerbaijanian, Ukrainian, Jewish and gypsy productions.

These two developments, the children's theaters and the national theaters, are entirely Soviet products. Czarist Russia did not undertake even the ordinary state educational obligations to its children, not to speak of children's theaters; and it suppressed every form of national cultural expression outside of Russia proper. In providing theaters for children, and national theaters for the smaller components of the Soviet Union, that country has set examples that the most advanced other nations have yet to follow.


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# Delacroix and the "Social Realists"

**By William Thor Burger**

THE summer slump, a relic of Impressionist days like the gallery system itself, has begun. With the exception of one new masterpiece what is left in the galleries has more of a didactic than an esthetic interest. The show of waterfront artists at the Tribune Book Store, for example, demonstrates how much more effective artists can be as a group than on their own. The group, organized by Alzira Pierce, consists of artists who went to sea during the war, and young seamen who have stayed ashore to become artists. None of them would merit a solo, yet together they have held several exhibitions.

They not only think of themselves as a workshop, but they have functioned as one. In recent months almost as much of the art work of the *Daily Worker* and the NEW MASSES has been turned out by them as by the cultural branches. The ex-seamen have drawn "agit-prop" cartoons both for their union and for the Communist Party. Concerned with the limited distribution of works of art, they have developed photo-printed sets of drawings at prices low enough for any market. The artists are all sufficiently young so that there is no need to be unduly depressed at their present moderate level of quality.

A more sophisticated group of young artists have taken over the 44th St. Gallery. Rather more than halfway between Fourteenth St. and Fifty-seventh St., the 44th St. Gallery has that moody and bitter flavor which marked the art of Union Square in the Thirties. Two dozen lithos by Elizabeth Catlett, Charles White, Joe Rowe, Helen Maris, Brahm Lieber and Max Zolotow have a much closer identity of style than one normally finds in a group exhibition. The lithographic medium in new hands tends to be overly black and emphatic, but it is a stylistic trait that lithography attracts all of the group.

They call themselves "social realists," but they may be more aptly described as pessimistic social symbolists. The characters in the prints are the normal protagonists of class struggle, "the worker," "the mother," "the refugee," "the Negro" and "the Priest." Their actions, emotion, and costumes are typological. The figures are sympathetically twisted with agony or antipathetically twisted with cruelty, in a fashion as black and white as the drawing. The draughtsmanly style varies between abstract and symbolic. Some, like Catlett and White, tend towards the cubist manner by dividing their figures into planes. Others, like Rowe and Maris, distort with the rough strokes and summarize forms of expressionism. The half-dozen prints by Zolotow, on the dividing line, flow from the more naturalistic Mexican and Italian masters.

Social these artists surely are, but realists never. Of undeniable vigor and considerable talent, these young artists are so much under the influence of the forms of modern art that with the best intentions, and much conscious theorizing, they are still unable to leave the artistic boundaries of middle-class culture. To them, as to so many others, left-wing art seems to consist of injecting social content into anti-social forms. Their own intense seriousness and talent nonetheless shines through.

Not the least interesting part of the 44th St. Gallery is its director, Marc Perper, a very able artist of the 1930's who found himself a decade ago on the horns of the dilemma that faces his printmakers. Since he himself has moved from neo-romanticism to social art and back toward the abstract, he knows how to understand and sympathize with the struggles of young artists finding their way towards a new art. His gallery will be among the most interesting in New York.

THE ACA recently showed the work of a sixty-year-old mother, Julia Brestovan, who naturally and effortlessly achieves what professionals arrive at arduously. As rich in color and cuisine as Burliuk, as tender in sentiment as the Soyers, as folksy as Doris Lee, her greatest charm lies in a transparent honesty which avoids art.

Also at the ACA was Joe Leboit, a large part of whose work was destroyed in a recent fire. His work is a left-wing American variation of expressionism. Although he has been painting for only six years, his work looks as if he had been at it longer.



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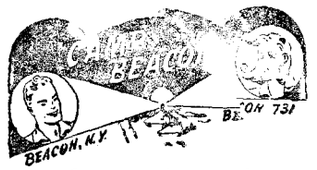


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One of them is the "Liberty Leading the People to the Barricades," painted in 1830 by Eugene Delacroix. Obscured by atrocious lighting, it still has power to move this reviewer to tears of excitement.

*"La Barricade"* is propagandistic social art. It describes the anti-bourbon revolution of 1830 which placed the *bon bourgeois* Louis Phillipe on the throne. If the outlandish constumes of 1830 were changed to zippers and slacks, and if the Paris tenements were repainted after Third Avenue, the picture would be banned by the police as an effective excitement to revolution.

In terms of the Romanticist revolution of 1824 the Delacroix is romantic painting. That is to say, in comparison with the classicists the color is bright and warm, the movement violent, the composition active, the painter's touch visible and athletic, the characters contemporary and picturesque, the figure proportions free of classic canons, the proprieties of blood, nakedness and rags violated, and the unities disregarded. True, the figure of liberty is of classical origin, but she unclassically exists on the same plane of reality as contemporary Parisians.

In comparison to its immediate stylistic predecessors it seemed to avoid the stylistic marks of 'art,' that is to say, the geometrizing and simplifying of drawing and composition. The drawing is free and direct, and, for its day, quite naturalistic. Compared to the early Ingres, Girardet, or the late David, it seems singularly loose and free from the machinery of composition, from what were then considered the abstract virtues of a work of art. *"La Barricade"* spoke, and still speaks, in the warm tongue of the streets. Its language has remained direct and understandable, free from accents of connoiseurship, for more than a hundred years.

The thought occurs that revolutionary young painters of today might do well to look up for a moment from the *Cahiers d'Art* stuffed with Picasso of 1915, Klee, Matisse and Brancusi, and study the work of Delacroix, David, Daumier and Courbet.

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